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DECORATIVE FURNITURE

A PICTURE BOOK OF THE BEAUTIFUL FORMS OF ALL AGES AND ALL PERIODS: EGYPTIAN, ASSYRIAN, GREEK, ROMAN, BYZANTINE, CHINESE, JAPANESE, PERSIAN, ROMANESQUE, GOTHIC, FRENCH RENAISSANCE, ITALIAN RENAISSANCE, LATER ITALIAN, LOUIS XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, DIRECTOIRE AND EMPIRE, SPANISH, PORTUGUESE, FLEMISH, DUTCH, SWISS, ELIZABETHAN, JACOBEAN, CHARLES II, WILLIAM AND MARY, QUEEN ANNE, EARLY GEORGIAN, CHIPPENDALE, ADAM, HEPPLEWHITE, SHERATON, AMERICAN COLONIAL, MODERN EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN, AMERICAN MISSION.

BY

GEORGE LELAND HUNTER

AUTHOR OF

"Decorative Textiles"; "Tapestries, Their Origin, History and Renaissance"; "Italian Furniture and Interiors"

WITH MORE THAN 900 ILLUSTRATIONS
23 PLATES IN COLOR

749
H91

GRAND RAPIDS
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TO MY ADORED WIFE, ESTHER

127268

PREFACE

The illustrations are the important part of this book. The text furnishes background and scale for the complete understanding of the periods.

The credit for assembling the illustrations, most of which have appeared in the pages of *Good Furniture Magazine* during the past nine years, (though many are new) is due largely to various contributors, chief among them William Laurel Harris, whose articles on the origin of American Mission were the first really important contribution made to the study of this style. Other contributors, illustrations from whose articles have been used, are: Richard F. Bach, Arthur Byne, Paul Chalfin, Stewart Culin, Walter E. Dyer, W. P. Dudley, H. Donaldson Eberlein, J. Monroe Hewlett, Edward Stratton Holloway, J. A. Hunter, Abbot McClure, Leila Mechlin, W. G. Blaikie Murdoch, Eliza M. Niblack, C. Matlack Price, J. Frank Purdy, Lionel Robertson, J. H. Rudd, Edward R. Smith, Charles D. Thomson, William Walton, Elsie F. Weil.

The two principal distinctions of furniture according to form are those between case furniture and frame furniture, that is to say between box furniture and skeletonized furniture, between furniture for storage and furniture constructed to support the human body.

Chests and the cabinets derived from them in the course of centuries, are the principal forms of case furniture. Chairs and beds and tables are the principal forms of frame furniture. There is also much furniture of a mixed type which serves both for storage and for the body, such as chests used to sit on and dine from and lie upon. The most distinguished example of the seat chests is the Florentine *cassapanca* (chest-bench), with high back and arms of case construction.

The two fundamental style divisions are Classic and Romantic. Classic is rectilinear and symmetrical. Romantic is curvilinear and irregular. Greek architecture is the extreme of Classic. Japanese painting is the extreme of Romantic. Classic leans on geometry. Romantic leans on Nature.

Classic is more human. Romantic is more divine. Art is what man makes. Nature is what God makes. Man works with plumb line and foot rule. God works on an infinite scale. Nature is the raw material out of which man creates Art for human needs. God's architecture is vastly grander than human architecture. But man-built

houses, with horizontal floors and perpendicular walls, are better than caves to live in, and man-built churches and cathedrals are better than hills and valleys and mountains for the celebration of religious ceremonies.

In furniture, to distinguish between Classic and Romantic is important. It makes obvious the fundamental differences between Renaissance and Baroque, Louis XIV and Louis XV, Chippendale and Adam, Louis XVI and Art Nouveau, Egyptian and Chinese.

Great structural styles tend to emphasize Classic architectural, at the expense of decorative Romantic. Great ornamental styles tend to emphasize decorative Romantic, at the expense of Classic architectural. The Occidental styles, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Romanesque, and Renaissance, are architectural and Classic. The Oriental styles, Chinese, Japanese, Hindoo, are decorative and Romantic. The West seems to have developed architecture at the expense of decoration. The East seems to have developed decoration at the expense of architecture.

Gothic is unique. It is architectural, but it is not symmetrical. There is no balance between horizontal and vertical. Vertical lines are emphasized at the expense of horizontal, so that Gothic architecture instead of resting solidly on the ground like Classic architecture, is full of upward movement. Compared with Classic, Gothic is a Romantic style. But compared with Romantic, it is a Classic style.

Classic and Romantic are comparative terms. No style is absolutely Classic. If it were, it would look like Geometry. No style is absolutely Romantic. If it were, it would be worse than Art Nouveau. The round arches of Roman, inherited from architecture developed in brick in Mesopotamia, make Roman less Classic than Greek. The S's and C's and broken lines and complexities of Baroque make it, in spite of its emphasized symmetry, less Classic than Renaissance. The irregular and unsymmetrical curves of Rococo distinguish it as Romantic. The symmetrical straight lines of Louis XVI and Adam distinguish them as Classic.

The virtues of Classic are simplicity and balance and proportion and static beauty of form. The virtues of Romantic are variety and mystery and passion and movement and life. But exaggerated Classic is apt to be hard and dry and monotonous and uninteresting, while exaggerated Romantic is restless and illogical.

New York, July 26th, 1923 G. L. H.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Decorative Furniture is a companion volume to *Decorative Textiles*, published in 1918 by Good Furniture Magazine. Only a limited edition has been printed from type and the type distributed.

Whereas important advances in the textile arts in our own day made it logical and necessary to show in *Decorative Textiles* numerous examples of American twentieth century decorative weaving, it was felt that America's twentieth century contribution to the art of furniture making is still in too formative a stage to make it advisable to devote more than one chapter to contemporary American furniture.

The purpose of the present volume is to provide practical information about the beautiful forms of furniture of all ages, from ancient Egypt to modern times, so that those who follow the author's clear explanations of fundamental relationships, likenesses and differences, may gain, by reference to the illustrations, a sounder knowledge of furniture and more power to appreciate and correctly appraise it.

The editor knows of no previous work on furniture, in any language, which answers this purpose so well, with its marvelous illustrations (more than 900 in number) and with a story so simply and so delightfully told.

Grand Rapids, August 4th, 1923 HENRY W. FROHNE

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CORRECTIONS

Descriptive titles under the two reliefs at the top of page 22, in the Egyptian chapter, should be transposed; also the descriptive titles under the two Empire chairs at the top of page 255, of the chapter on Later French Furniture.

Child's size, in the Cairo Museum. From the tomb of Iouya and Touyou, great-grandparents of Queen Ankhnesamen, wife of Tutankhamen. The cushion is the original one

EGYPTIAN CHAIR OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY B. C.

DECORATIVE FURNITURE

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN FURNITURE

Egypt is the great-grandmother of us all. Compared with Egyptian, all other ancient wooden furniture is modern. Preserved in the tombs of Egypt, it has survived to tell us that centuries before Helen of Troy eloped with Paris, and more than a millennium before Alexander the Great conquered the world, and three millenniums before the Florentine Renaissance, Egypt had already for fifteen hundred years, been creating furniture forms that are the ancestors of our own.

Ancient Egyptian wooden furniture excels not only in antiquity, but also in quantity. We have more of it than from all other countries in the world, previous to European Gothic; more than from Babylonia and Assyria, Greece and Rome, the Byzantine Empire, and early Persia, China and India, combined.

Compared with the concrete evidence telling us the facts about Egyptian architecture and furniture of the Age of the Pyramids—that is to say, of the first half of the Third Millennium B. C.—the amount of similar evidence from all other countries is trivial. Right here, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York, we have an ancient Egyptian stone house, erected in the Twenty-Seventh Century B. C., buried for millenniums beneath the drifting sands, recently excavated stone by stone and brought thousands of miles west to give us information about the life of our architectural and decorative ancestors. This house is the so-called Mastaba of Perneb, the after-death home of Perneb, one of the high Egyptian government officials of the Age of the Pyramids.

It is of course possible that we may some time in the future discover concrete remains of the art and architecture of other countries showing a development parallel with that of Egypt. But it is extremely improbable. At present, claims for other countries of an early artistic and architectural activity at all comparable with that of Egypt lack facts to support them. Crete and Babylonia certainly

trailed Egypt, while the concrete evidence from China is comparatively modern. The recent attempts to assert for early American art and architecture an antiquity at all comparable with that of Egyptian art and architecture are ridiculous.

The Mastaba of Perneb gives Americans an opportunity to study first-hand not only an Ancient Egyptian building but also Ancient Egyptian mural colored reliefs picturing Ancient Egyptians alive and in action. These reliefs also show Ancient Egyptian furniture, notably the ox-leg chairs in which Perneb is seated.

Other mural reliefs and gravestones of early Egypt, show not only Ancient Egyptian chairs and stools of many varieties but also stands and tables and couches and beds. Still other reliefs show artists engaged in the actual production of works of art, carving, sculpture, making furniture, weaving. Miniature models in clay reveal to us the forms of early Egyptian peasant houses. Mural reliefs picture for us the beautiful palaces in which nobles lived. At Tell-el-Amarna, and elsewhere, we are gradually unearthing the foundations and the brilliantly pictured walls of royal palaces.

The tomb of Tutankhamen, of the Fourteenth Century B. C., is not so important for the furniture and treasures it contained as for the general interest it has aroused throughout the world in the other treasures of Ancient Egypt, previously discovered and to be seen in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the British Museum, the Louvre, the Turin Museum, the Berlin Museum, the Brussels Museum, and elsewhere, as well as in the Cairo Museum and in the Valley of the Tombs. Nothing quickens modern life like inspiration from ancient life. Nothing has inspiration for modern artists and artisans like the splendid accomplishments of past Ages.

Most of the Ancient Egyptian wooden furniture that has come down to us was made in the Fifteenth and Fourteenth Centuries B. C. The two most important sources are the tombs of Iouya and Touyou, and of Tutankhamen. Interesting miniature wooden models of the Twentieth Century B. C., are those from the tomb of Mehenkwetre, now in the Cairo Museum and in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Besides wooden furniture from Ancient Egypt, we also have stone furniture in the form of chairs and thrones bearing the portrait statues of gods, pharaohs and nobles. Many of the stone chairs date from the time of the Pyramids, and are a thousand years older than

the wooden chairs. These stone chairs are uniformly simple in shape as befits the monumental character of stone, often square blocks covered with hieroglyphic inscriptions, sometimes with backs only five or six inches high, curved full on the side next the body, sometimes with high backs.

Besides the actual chairs in stone and wood, we have hundreds of pictures of furniture of all kinds, on colored gravestones and mural reliefs and in papyrus manuscripts. Among the more luxurious of the chairs, are those reproduced in color elsewhere in this volume, chairs with high backs and soft squash cushions, from the tombs of the Kings of the Empire Period (1580-945 B. C.).

Extraordinarily interesting are the ox and lion legs of Ancient Egyptian chairs and couches and beds. In the earlier period, ox legs were more usual and testify to the importance of agriculture in early Egypt. Later, lion legs became more common, indicating perhaps the increasing importance of armies, and of lion-like bravery, as Egypt developed into a mighty Empire.

This animal furniture is more truly alive than any other good furniture ever made. The front legs of the chairs and couches are the front legs of oxen or lions; the rear legs of chairs and couches are the hind legs of oxen or lions. So that, if the chair or couch were metamorphosed into life, it would actually be able to walk without splitting apart like Roman lion-legged furniture, or marching off in four different directions like Louis XIV deer-feet chairs.

Often, over the front leg of Ancient Egyptian lion-legged chairs and couches, we find the head of the lion, or a human head, the latter suggesting an analogy with sphinxes.

I have often wondered about the ancestry of Roman and Renaissance furniture legs, with lion or human head growing out of lion leg. The answer, I believe, is to be found in the Egyptian ancestry of such forms. The Romans took the idea from the front leg, with head, of Egyptian animal furniture, but instead of the front leg used the rear leg which gives the concave form that Romans liked.

A vivid picture of a lion chair complete with head, is contained in the portrait of Amenhotep III, reproduced on another page. Another is one of the chairs reproduced in color, from the Valley of the Kings. An actual sphinx chair in concrete wooden form is that of Princess Sitamon, the head being that of the Princess herself.

One of the chairs reproduced in color, from the Valley of the

Kings, shows a Nubian and a bearded Syrian captive bound to the X frame; the Syrian captive bound with the papyrus that stands for Northern Egypt, the Nubian captive bound with the lotus that stands for Southern Egypt.

Another of the chairs illustrated in color, from the Valley of the Kings, shows a sphinx, symbolic of Egypt, triumphant over the prostrate form of a Syrian captive. Below are pictured the lotus and the papyrus of the Double Kingdom, of Southern and of Northern Egypt, which King Menes is said to have united about 3400 B. C.

An interesting feature of some of the chairs is the double back which can be seen clearly in the illustrations of the chair from the Museum of the New York Historical Society and in the chair of Princess Sitamon. The inner back comes forward below and is shaped to fit the body. The outer back is a supporting frame. This is good decoratively as well as solid constructively and I should not be surprised to see it copied in some of the reproductions and adaptations of Egyptian furniture that will soon be in vogue.

The circular inlays on the chair in the Museum of the New York Historical Society, and the carving on the chair illustrated in color as the frontispiece of this volume, as well as on the chair of Princess Sitamon, are of extraordinary merit. The carving on the legs of the bed illustrated is more than excellent; it is marvelous. It shows a successful compromise between fidelity to nature and the conventionalization necessary for decorative rhythm and for use value which has seldom been paralleled in any Age.

We have considerable evidence regarding the upholstery of Ancient Egyptian furniture. The cushion illustrated in our frontispiece is the original cushion. The plaited fibres on the Egyptian bed are original, as are also the fibre and leather seats of the stools illustrated, and the plaited string seat of the chair of Princess Sitamon. Huge soft squash cushions are shown in the chairs pictured in color from the Valley of the Kings.

The rich color of some Egyptian furniture is suggested by our frontispiece. The coloring is purely decorative and intended primarily to enhance distinction of form.

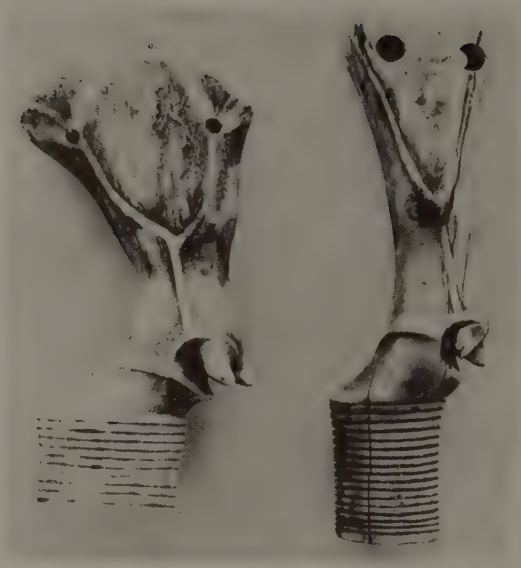
The gravestone of Nenwaf at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, not only shows lion-legged chairs and round tables but it shows them in use, and it illustrates a stage in the development from the "Squat" Age, when people sat on the floor, to the "Upright" Age,

when people sit from sixteen to twenty inches above the floor. The young daughter does not sit on her chair, which is lower than the others, but half-squats on it. It will be noticed that all of these four chairs have double backs.

The importance of the lotus in the life of Ancient Egypt is shown by the full-blown flowers of father and son, and by the buds of mother and daughter. I feel sure that if today a distinction were made between the use of flowers and buds, the ladies would get the flowers.

I almost forgot to speak of the extraordinary carving of the ivory ox-legs illustrated, from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Like the legs of most Egyptian animal furniture, they are supported on spools with horizontal fluting. The purpose of these spools seems to me to have been primarily decorative.

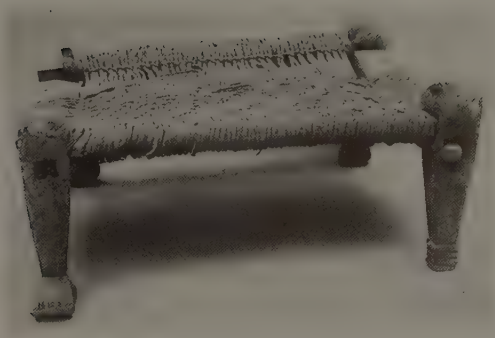
One of the folding stools illustrated from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is an extraordinary piece of furniture. Aided perhaps by branches shaped in the growing, the ancient maker has adorned the four legs, and terminated the two shoes, with ducks' heads, marking the eyes and nostrils with inlays of ivory and ebony. The way in which the legs flatten out into duck-bills, mortised at the tip into the shoes, and in which the duck heads of the two shoes curve back to meet the body, is delightfully naturalistic and altogether decorative as well as perfectly sane construction. The seat rails of this folding stool are pierced with holes for the upholstery.



Ox legs of couch, in ivory.
Note the supporting spools

Wooden couch with ox legs, made before the
Pyramids. Note the spools on which the legs stand

(1)



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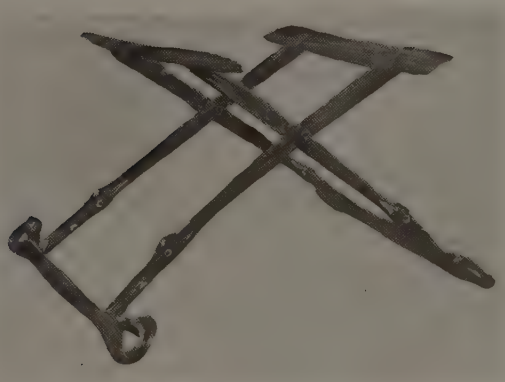


(5)

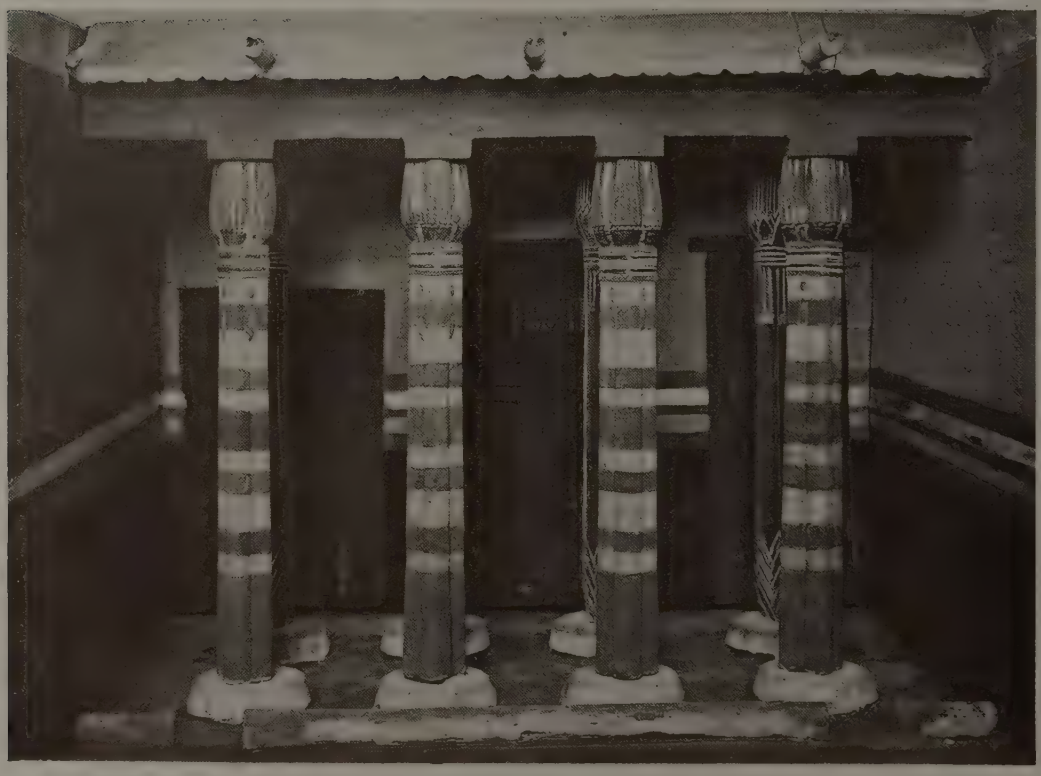
(1), (2), (3) Upholstered in fibre; (4) in leather. (5) Note the ducks' heads formed by natural growth of the wood, plus inlays of ivory and ebony

EGYPTIAN FURNITURE 3,500 YEARS OLD IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Two views of the oldest wooden chair in America, made in Egypt over 3,500 years ago. Note the circular inlays of bone and ebony. In the Museum of the New York Historical Society

Squat chair in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Below, from ancient mural picture, stools, chairs, and beds, of the period of Tutankhamen. Note on the two beds, the head-rests that served instead of pillows. Above, a mural picture of the Twentieth Century B. C., furniture makers at work



Two views of a miniature model in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, from the tomb of Mehenkwetre.

Below, garden porch of an ancient Egyptian house. Note the lotus columns in front and the papyrus columns behind; also the window on the right, the large door in the middle, and the small door on the left. Above, the doors and window from the inside. Above the large door is a latticed light. The doors have horizontal braces, the window vertical slits to let the air through

EGYPTIAN DOORS AND WINDOWS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY B. C.

Child's chair from the tomb of Iouya and Touyou, great-grandparents of Queen Ankhnesamen, wife of Tutankhamen

Back view of the child's chair pictured in the colored frontispiece

EGYPTIAN ARM CHAIRS OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY B. C., IN THE CAIRO MUSEUM

EGYPTIAN ROYAL CHAIRS AS PICTURED 3,000 YEARS AGO

EGYPTIAN ROYAL CHAIRS AS PICTURED 3,000 YEARS AGO

The chair is a sphinx with lion legs and human heads. The carved heads are portraits of Princess Sitamon whose painted likeness appears in doublet on the inside of the back of the chair. From the tomb of Iouya and Touyou

CHAIR OF PRINCESS SITAMON IN THE CAIRO MUSEUM. MADE IN EGYPT IN THE

Outside of right arm. The Goddess Thoueris between dancing figures of Bes

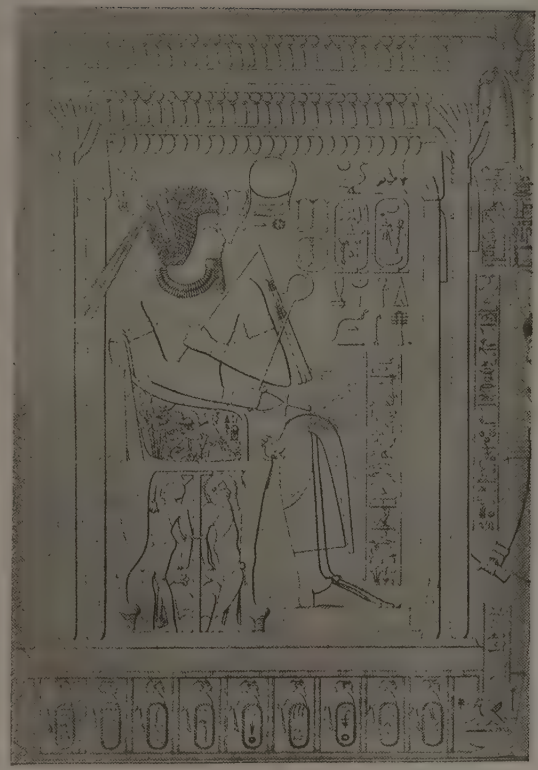
Outside of left arm. Three dancing figures of Bes

CHAIR OF PRINCESS SITAMON (OUTSIDE OF ARMS)

Chair of Princess Sitamon. Inside of back showing doublet portrait of the Princess

Chair of Princess Sitamon. Inside of left arm showing her hand-maidens bringing offerings. The inside of the right arm is a replica

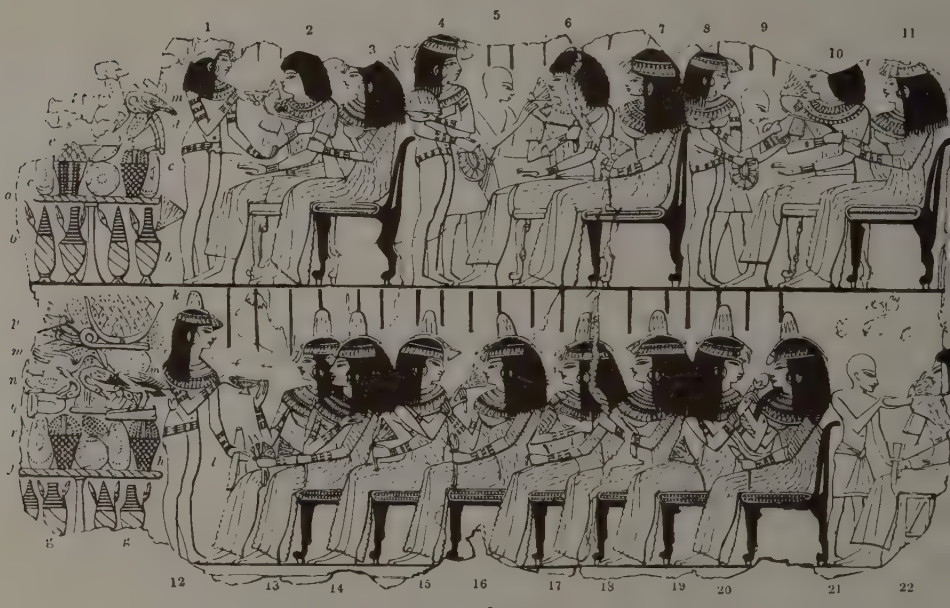
CHAIR OF PRINCESS SITAMON (INSIDE OF BACK AND ARMS)



On the left, chair of Amenhotep III, from the beginning of the Fourteenth Century B. C. On the right, chair from the Twentieth Century B. C. or earlier, on a carved and painted gravestone in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

CONTRASTING ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ROYAL CHAIRS OF DIFFERENT PERIODS

Dinner party before the Egyptians used chairs



Dinner party after the Egyptians developed chairs

THE "SQUAT" AGE CONTRASTED WITH THE "CHAIR" AGE

In the Cairo Museum; from the tomb of Iouya and Touyou. Below, bed with lion legs that, as usual, face away from the foot of the bed. Above, outside of the footboard of another bed, with gilt plaster panels in low relief

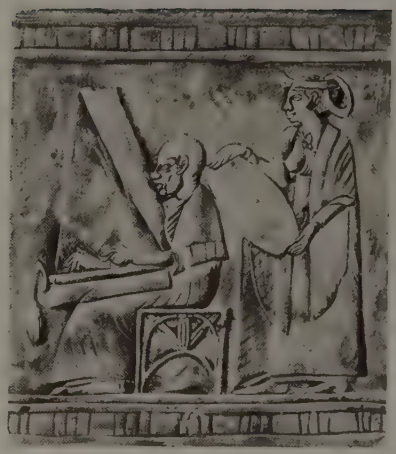
EGYPTIAN BEDS OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY B. C.

Early Fourteenth Century B. C.

Early Fourteenth Century B. C.

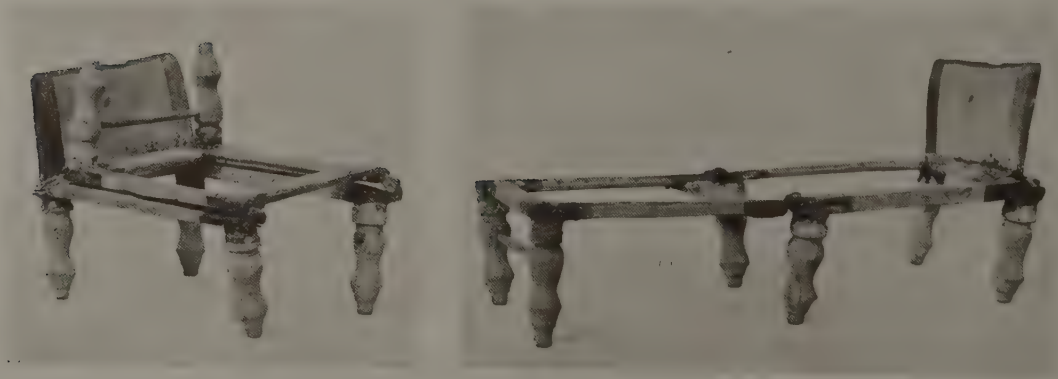
CIENT EGYPTIAN STOOL AND SMALL BENCH IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

From a stone relief of the Sixth Century B. C. showing a bentwood stool



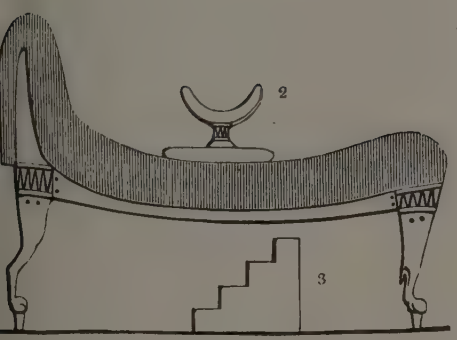
From a carved stone coffin of the Twenty-first Century B. C.

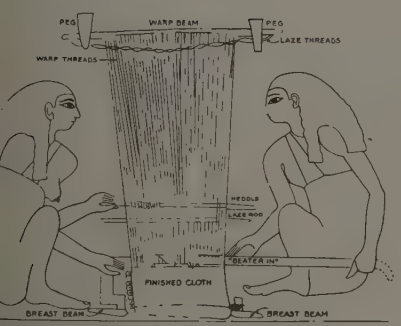
Miniature funerary models of chair, bed, and trunks. From the tomb of Mehenkwetre. Twentieth Century B. C.



Miniature model of a folding bed, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Empire Period (1580-1150 B. C.)

ANCIENT PICTURES AND MODELS OF EGYPTIAN FURNITURE





Above, lion-legged chairs in use at an ancient Egyptian reception. In the middle, on the left, ancient Egyptian lion-legged bed with mattress and head rest, and steps for ascending. On the right, funeral bed showing the lion with both head and tail. Below, weaving and making pottery. All from ancient Egyptian mural pictures

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN LION-LEGGED CHAIRS AND BEDS

From the tomb of Iouya and Touyou, and now in the Cairo Museum. Note the round pulls, the relief ornament on the panels of the lower cabinet, and the cornice of the upper cabinet. The upper cabinet is 20 inches long; the lower one, 15 inches long

EGYPTIAN PAINTED WOODEN CABINETS OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY B. C.

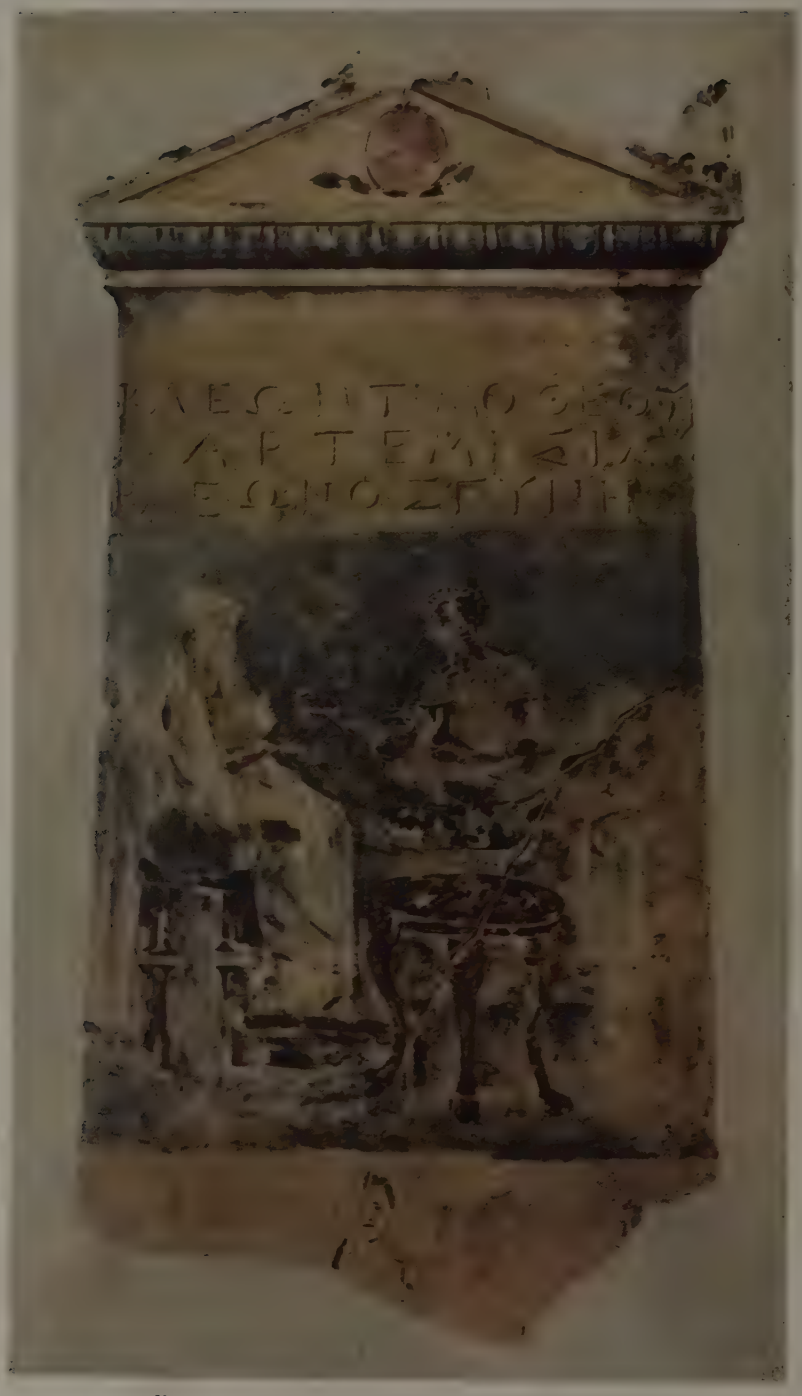
Brilliantly inlaid with glazed blue tiles, and bearing the name of Amenhotep III, father of Akhnaton who was the father-in-law of Tutankhamen. Charming in shape and splendidly made. From the tomb of Iouya and Touyou, and now in the Cairo Museum. Twenty inches high

EGYPTIAN WOODEN JEWEL CABINET OF AMENHOTEP III

From an ancient Egyptian mural picture. The governor of Ethiopia presenting tribute to Tutankhamen. Note the archaic low back of the chair

THE THRONE CHAIR OF TUTANKHAMEN

CHAPTER II



From an ancient Greek painted gravestone, pictured in water-color, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

GREEK TABLE, COUCH, CHAIR AND FOOTSTOOL OF THE THIRD CENTURY B. C.

CHAPTER II

BABYLONIAN AND ASSYRIAN, GREEK, ROMAN, AND BYZANTINE-ROMAN FURNITURE

Of Ancient Babylonian and Assyrian, Greek and Roman wooden furniture, little or none has survived. Even the ancient underground after-death houses of the Etruscans have failed to give us treasures equal to those of Ancient Egypt.

In Babylonia and Assyria, the common use of brick that crumbles, and the lack of permanent buildings in stone, accounts in part for the comparatively small amount of concrete evidence we have regarding Babylonian and Assyrian architecture and furniture.

We have, however, considerable Ancient Greek and Roman marble furniture and considerable Roman bronze furniture giving us original models adequate for reproduction and inspiration. The Greek and Roman marble furniture is mostly in museums, especially in those of the City of Rome. Much of the Roman bronze furniture is in the Naples Museum, from Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Making up in some degree for the lack of actual furniture, are the pictures of furniture presented in ancient bas-reliefs, paintings, and Babylonian-Assyrian seal cylinders.

An Assyrian alabaster bas-relief in the British Museum, illustrated on another page, shows King Ashurbanipal banqueting alone with his Queen. The grapes above indicate what the cups contain. It will be noticed that Ashurbanipal reclines at ease on a couch, while his Queen sits upright in an arm chair. The dining room table is high and small and square, with four legs that terminate below in lion paws resting upon a stand that is supported on short inverted pyramids. It will be noticed also that the lion paws face away from each other, unlike the lion legs already noted in Egyptian furniture.

To me, a study of the lion furniture illustrated in this and other reliefs indicates imperfect adaptation from Egyptian originals. The

tendency of a borrowed art, as is shown in the Italian silks of the Thirteenth Century A. D., copied from Sicilian, is to substitute rhythmical conventions for the more naturalistic original forms. Greek art did this when it took all the life out of architectural moldings that in the Egyptian originals were still alive with floral forms.

It cannot be said that this Assyrian furniture of King Ashurbanipal is beautiful. There are too many broken lines not only in the legs of chair and couch and table, but also in the footstool, and in the small table on the right carrying the King's bow and quiver. It will be noticed in the illustration, that the Queen sits on a cushion and has a cushion beneath her feet.

There is also in the British Museum an alabaster relief picture of a royal stool and footstool of the Ninth Century B. C., showing King Ashurnasirpal seated on a backless and armless stool-throne, with his feet resting on a lion-pawed footstool. The throne has a detachable cushion, apparently of leather, and apparently a long fringe pendant from the seat. Sculptured animal heads adorn the ends of the seat.

A royal Persian chair is the one pictured on an Ancient Persian stone relief, of which there is a plaster reproduction in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. King Xerxes sits high on a royal chair, which is supported by a huge throne of similar form.

The most important early piece of Greek furniture that has been preserved is the stone throne chair of Minos in Crete, from the palace at Knossos. This chair dates from the Fifteenth Century B. C. Our illustration is from a plaster reproduction in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Crete is the island home of the famous Greek statesman of today, Venizelos. I speak of this ancient Cretan chair as Greek, although the Cretans were of a different race from the Greeks from the North, who overwhelmed and crushed Cretan civilization. But in overwhelming it and crushing it, they were so much influenced by the art of the conquered race that the inheritance of Greek art from Cretan art is of prime importance, although it was many centuries after the decay of Cretan art before Greek art developed to a high point.

Ancient Cretan art, the understanding of which is so largely due to the excavations and magazine articles and books of Sir Arthur Evans, was the leading art of the islands and adjacent shores of the northeastern Mediterranean from the time of the Egyptian Pyr-

amids on. The art of the earlier cities of Troy that preceded Homeric Troy of the Twelfth Century B. C., was closely related to Cretan art.

The mural paintings of Ancient Crete throw considerable light on Ancient Cretan life. Of actual furniture there are numerous bathtubs and at least one important funeral chest, the last with construction indicating an earlier form made of wood. Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey" tell us much about the furniture of his period.

Numerous chairs of the Age of Pericles (Fifth Century B. C.) and of the Age of Alexander the Great (Fourth Century B. C.) are pictured in marble gravestone reliefs, several of which are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and many of which are to be seen in Athens as originally erected. Some of these chairs have straight round turned legs, the pictures apparently of actual furniture in wood or bronze, but the majority have the concave legs and the curved back so commonly copied or adapted in the French Empire Period and by Duncan Phyfe.

Much Etruscan furniture is pictured in the mural paintings of the underground tombs still to be seen at Corneto and elsewhere. This fact is important in the study of Roman furniture, because early Roman art was largely based on Etruscan.

The inheritance of Roman art from Greek art is not an alien inheritance but the inheritance of daughter from mother, an inheritance not only from Etruscan art in which Greek influence was dominant, but also directly from the Greeks of Southern Italy and Sicily and elsewhere. After the Second Century B. C. the finest Roman furniture was largely constructed by Greek artisans or by Roman artisans with the Greek tradition.

The principal distinction between Roman architecture and Greek architecture is in the Roman use of round arches and round vaults and bricks and cement, all probably derived in their ultimate origin from Babylonia, where round arches and vaults and domes had naturally developed in brick construction. At this point, it is interesting to note that the large thin stone-like bricks developed in the vicinity of the City of Rome are very different from the softer bricks commonly used in Northeastern Italy in the Valley of the Po. This is perhaps due to the difference in the materials available, the clay of the Po Valley being more like the clay of Mesopotamia, and consequently the bricks of the Po Valley more like the bricks of Mesopotamia.

Many splendid and richly carved marble tables of large size have been preserved to us from Ancient Rome, some of them entire and some with top missing. Probably the Romans also used similar tables made of wood. Two of the most beautiful marble table standards in existence are those now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, illustrated on another page. The carving is of incomparable excellence and has the same qualities of naturalism, guided by convention into perfect rhythm, that distinguish much Gothic naturalistic carving.

We also have a wealth of Ancient Roman carved marble funeral chests (sarcophagi) and bathtubs.

The Ancient Roman marble furniture in the Cleveland Museum, illustrated on another page, is worth a special visit to that city to see.

The Ancient Roman couch in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, with applied carvings of bone, though incorrectly reassembled, is one of the most important pieces of Ancient Roman furniture in existence. I have illustrated it both in black and white and in color to give opportunity for study of the details.

One of the most important Roman marble reliefs, illustrating not only Roman furniture but also a small Roman house, is the one in the British Museum picturing the visit of the god Dionysius to a playwright. It is illustrated on another page of this volume. It shows how the Ancient Greeks and Romans "went to bed" when they went to dinner, reclining on couches instead of sitting up on chairs. Without going into the complexities of the Roman triclinium (dining room) with its three couches each holding three guests, I refer to the marble picture just mentioned, as showing the use of a low round dining table with lion legs, similar to the bronze table in the Naples Museum, illustrated from the reproduction in the Field Museum of Natural History.

The common use of dining room couches, at least among the upper classes, accounts for the absence of dining room chairs.

Ancient Roman life did not call for the quantity or variety of furniture now common in Europe and America. The larger furniture for interior garden courts (peristyles) and monumental halls was usually made of marble or bronze, sometimes perhaps in wood, or in wood with bronze mounts. Much of the smaller furniture for private residences was made of bronze or of wood and bronze, like the furniture in the Naples Museum so much of which is illustrated. Probably the wooden furniture, which at Pompeii crumbled and disappeared

when exposed to light and air, after being buried for eighteen hundred years beneath cinders and ashes, was of construction similar to the bronze furniture but heavier in outline, as the material demands.

I cannot sufficiently emphasize the importance of the reproductions of Ancient Roman furniture on exhibition in the Field Museum of Natural History. They are of course in every way secondary as evidence to the originals in the Naples Museum, but they do give an infinitely clearer idea of what Ancient Roman furniture was than do any pictures. Not that I underestimate the value of pictures in conveying information. Indeed, the publication of this volume shows the contrary. But while pictures supplemented by captions and text are vastly more helpful than text alone to stimulate interest and understanding, one original object is worth a thousand pictures. The purpose of this book is not to take the place of the actual objects but to stir students to the necessity of aequaintance with the actual objects in the famous Art Museums of the world.

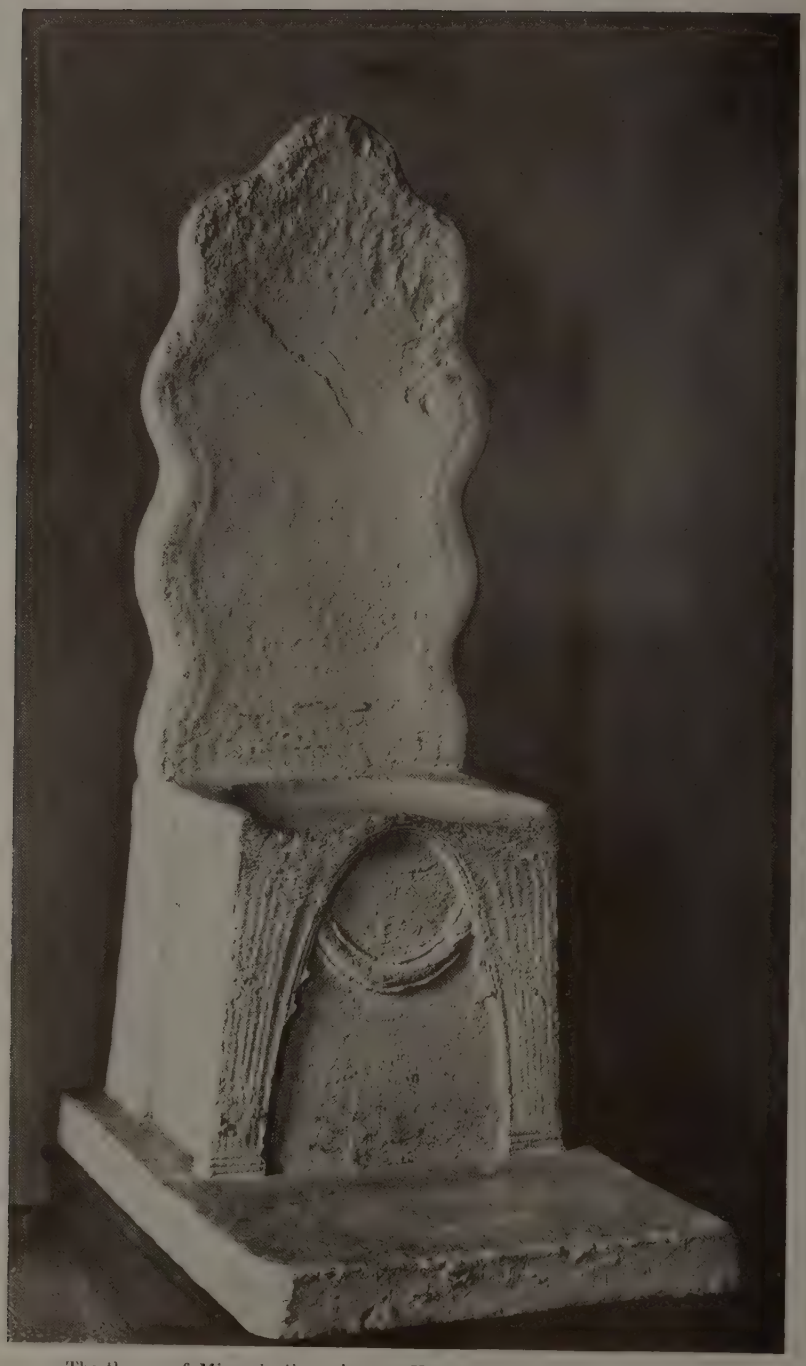
BYZANTINE FURNITURE

Most of what we know about Byzantine furniture is pictured in Byzantine mosaics, carved ivories and manuscripts. The most important chair that survives is the one at the Ravenna Cathedral, richly carved in ivory. The panels depict scenes from the lives of Jesus and Joseph, and the chair is said to be that of Maximian, Archbishop of Ravenna in the Sixth Century A. D.

Another chair dating from the Sixth Century is that in the Vatican, called the Chair of St. Peter.

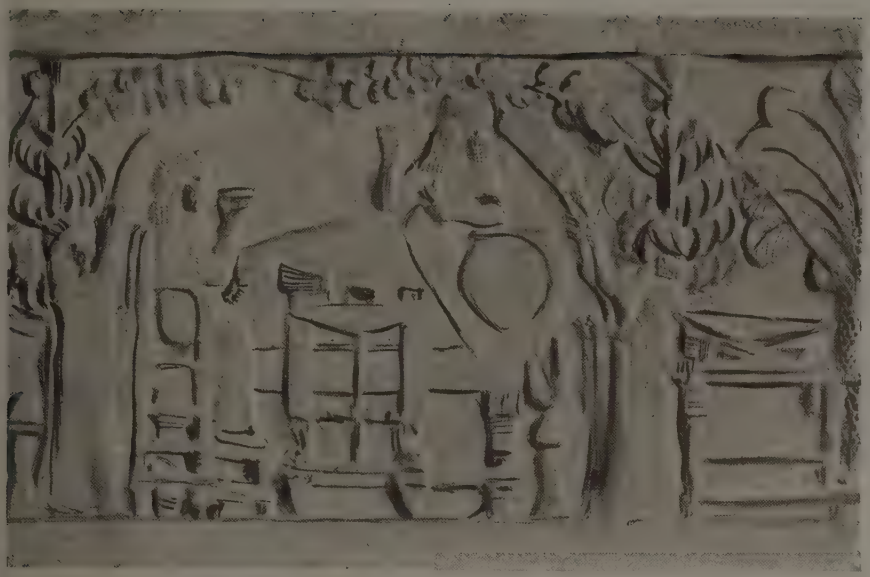
Interesting mosaic pictures of Byzantine throne-chairs with large soft cushions and richly inlaid, are those upon which Christ and the Virgin are seated in the Church of San Apollinare Nuovo, in Ravenna.

A bronze chair of about the same date is that in the Bibliothêque Nationale, Paris, called the Chair of King Dagobert. The back and arms are additions made in the Twelfth Century by Suger, Abbot of St. Denis. Note the lion-headed legs.



The throne of Minos in the palace at Knossos, Crete, the island home of Venizelos. From a plaster cast in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

CRETAN CHAIR OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY B. C.



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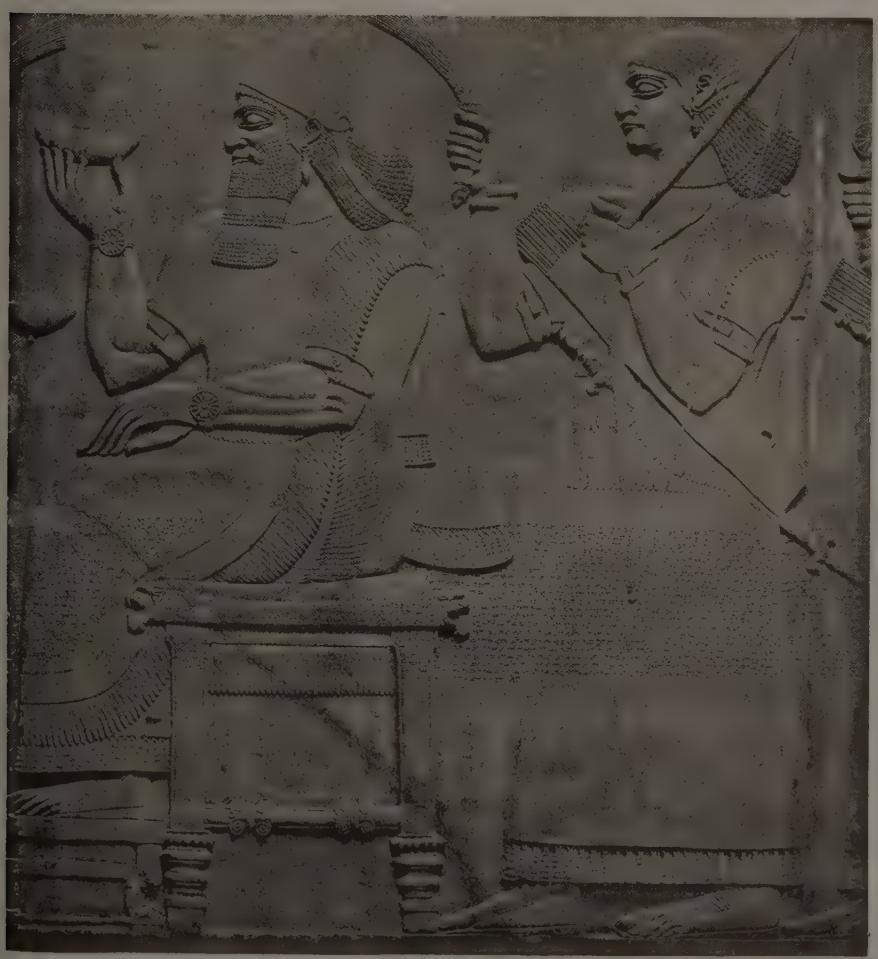
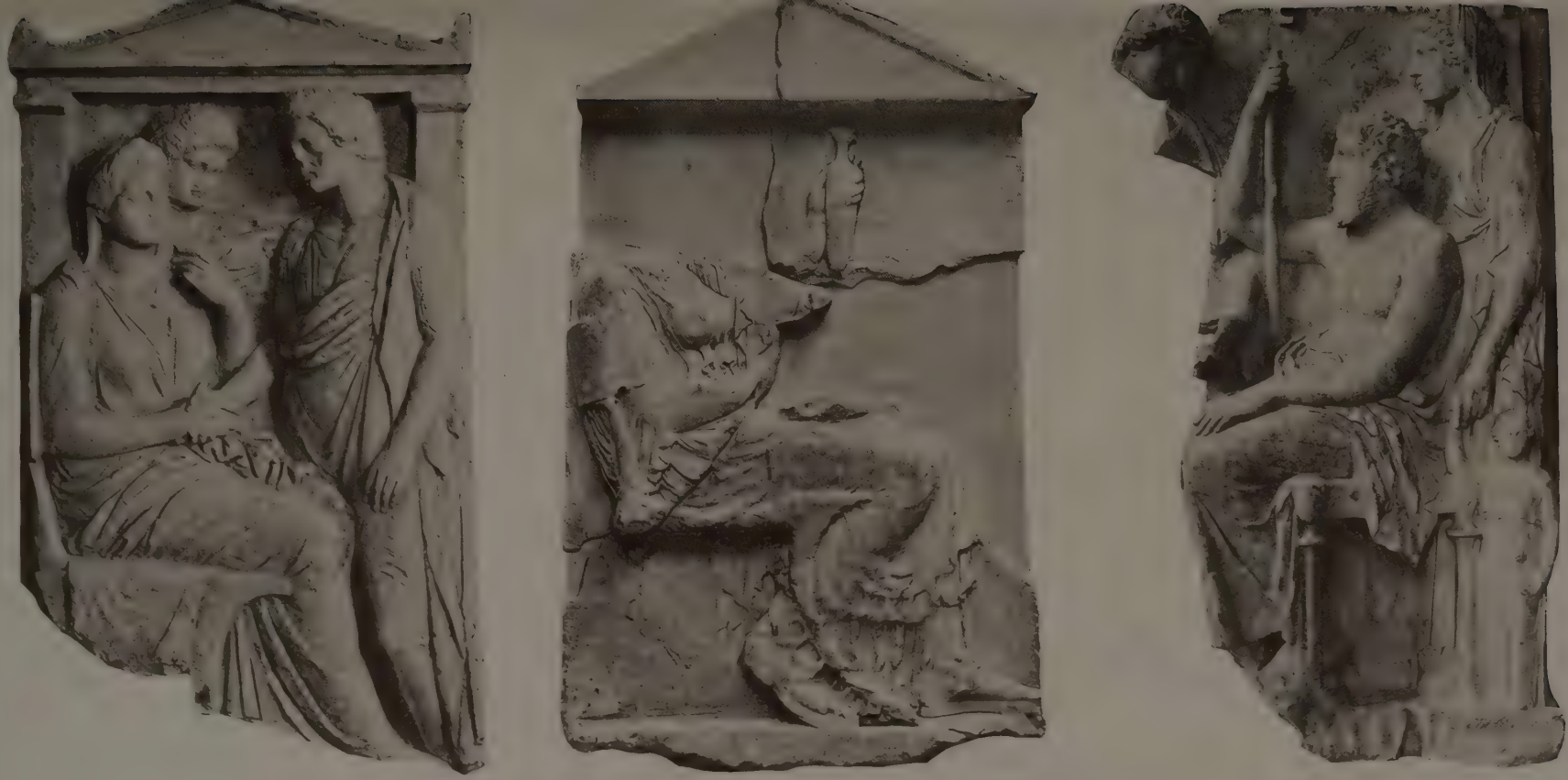


From ancient bas-reliefs in the British Museum. There is a cast of the lower one in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

ASSYRIAN AND PERSIAN FURNITURE OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY B. C.

From a Greek vase of the Fifth Century B. C., in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, showing Thetes and Vulcan. Note the tapestry pillows, and the curved rests behind them

PICTURE OF ANCIENT GREEK SOFA AND FOOTSTOOLS



In the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Note the front and rear legs concaving away from each other, in the two chairs on the left, ancestors of Duncan Phyfe chairs. Note also the backs. On the right, is shown a stool with high, turned legs. The middle gravestone is from the Fifteenth Century B. C.; the other two from the Fourth Century B. C.

CHAIRS ON ANCIENT GREEK MARBLE GRAVESTONES

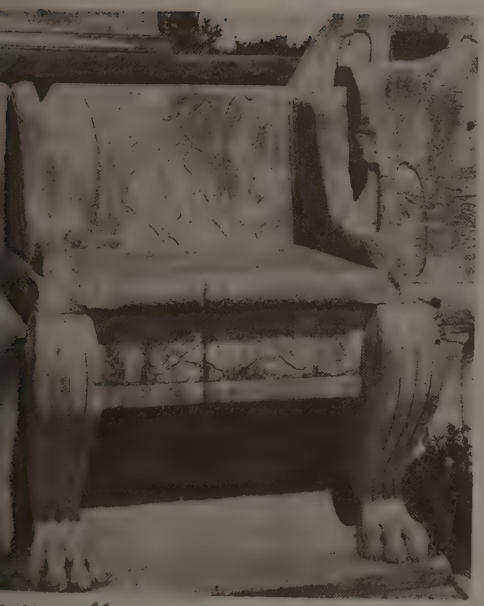
From Cyprus. Note the volutes at the top of the leg, and above the band of lions pursuing stags

SMALL ANCIENT GREEK BRONZE TABLE IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

In the Metropolitan Museum of Art. On the left, a Roman chair leg. On the right, a small, Late Greek lampstand

Visit of Dionysius to the house of a playwright. Note the theatrical masks on top of the small, low chest at the left. The scene shows how Greeks and Romans "went to bed" to eat dinner. The youthful playwright reclines on a mattressed and pillowed couch the turned metal legs of which are shown but dimly. But the curved headboard with pillow and the turned leg of the couch which the bearded guest is about to occupy, are in clear and distinct relief. The drapery behind the beds and the festoons of flowers a youth is hanging beneath the eaves of the main building of the house hang in flat Classic curves. The simple straight line, low tiled roof, square window construction of the house is clearly pictured. The young

Door of the Erechteum, Athens, one of the sources of ornament for the Scottish Rite Temple



Marble chair in the Theatre of Dionysius, Athens

Modern American wooden chair in the Scottish Rite Temple, inspired by ancient marble chair on the left

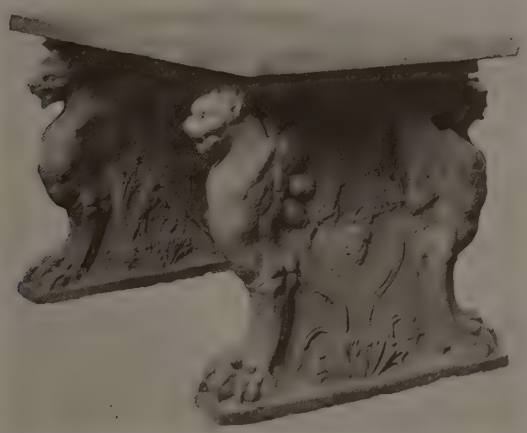
MODERN AMERICAN FURNITURE INSPIRED BY ANCIENT GREECE

With colored glass inlay, and carved ornament in bone. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan

ANCIENT ROMAN COUCH IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Goddess Cyeble enthroned on car. Ancient Roman bronze of the Second Century A. D. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art

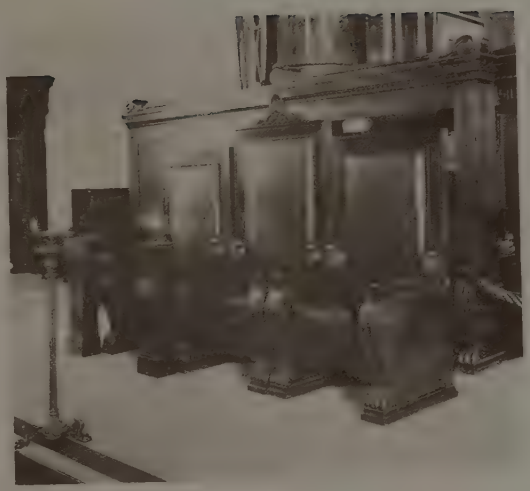
ANCIENT ROMAN CHAIR AND FOOTSTOOL



Marble garden furniture from Boscoreale, near Pompeii

Modern table standard from Pompeii

Modern American marble and bronze table, in the atrium of the Temple of the Scottish Rite, Washington, D. C.

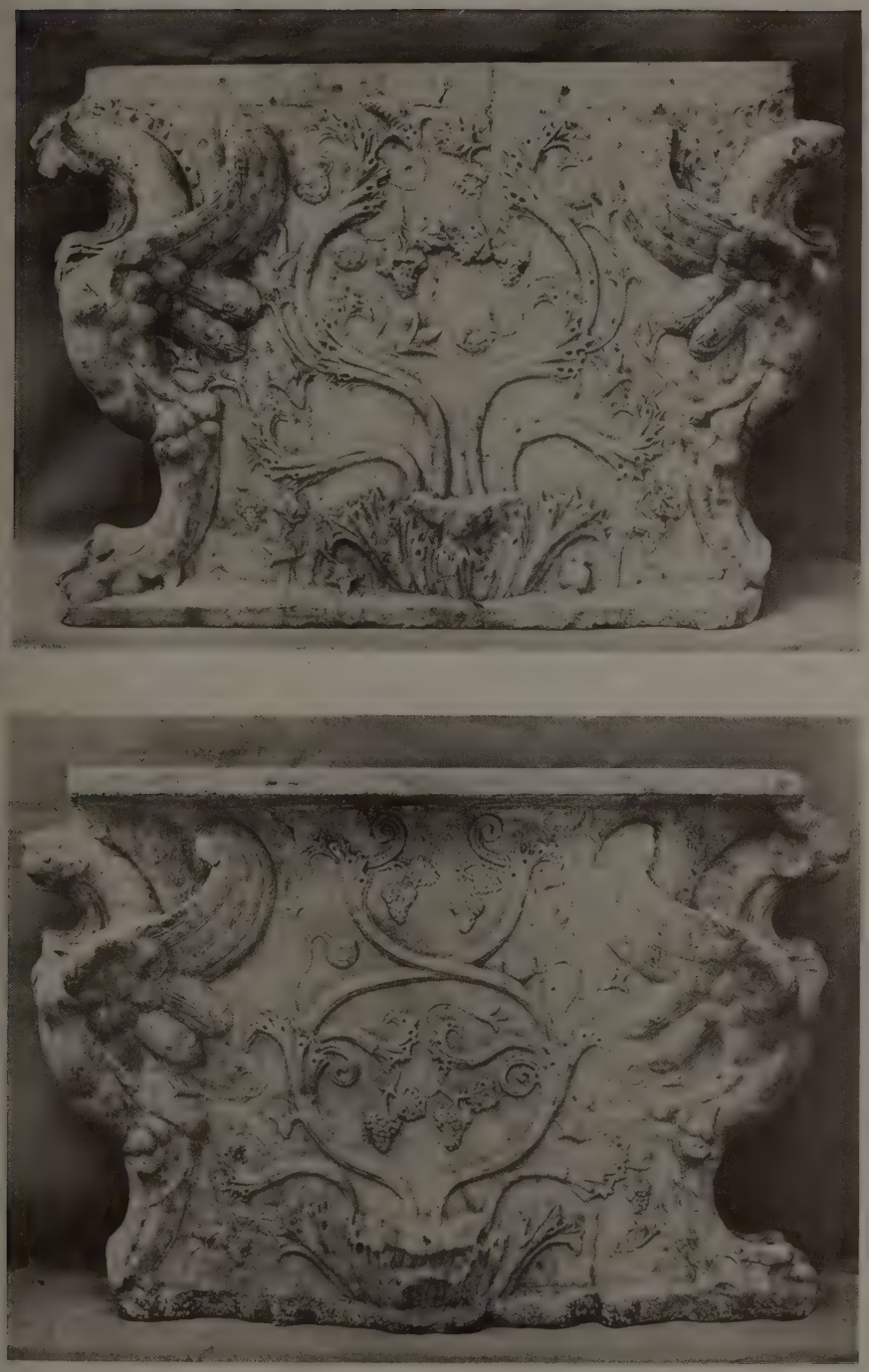


In the Temple of the Scottish Rite, Washington, D. C., John Russell Pope, architect

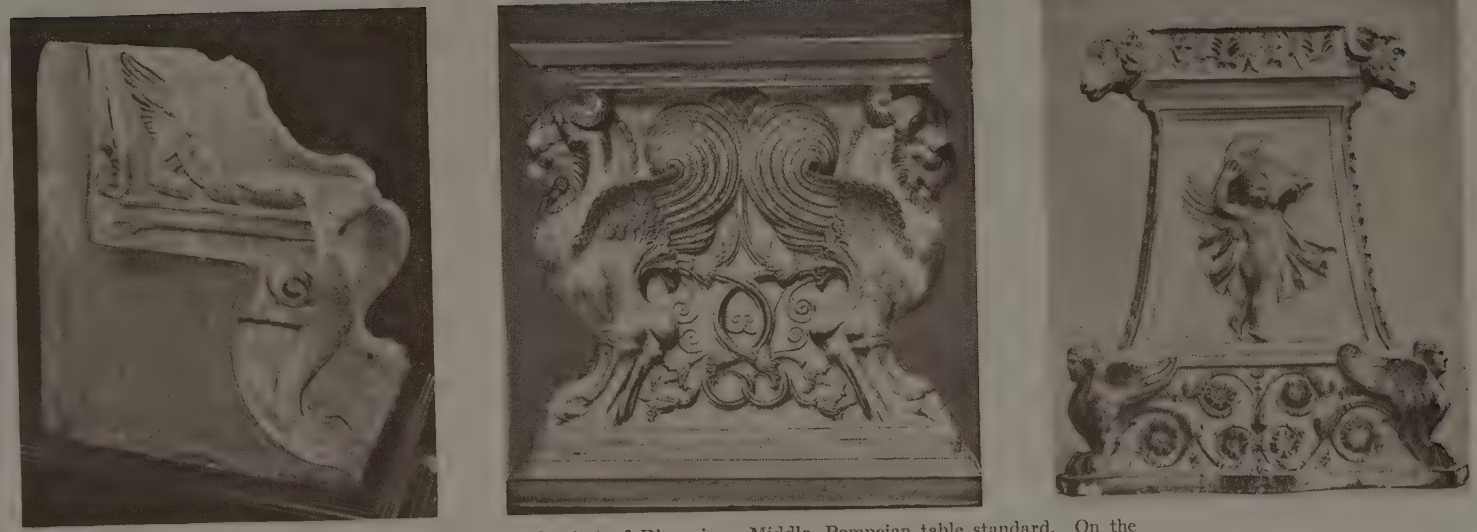
MODERN AMERICAN FURNITURE INSPIRED BY ANCIENT ROME

In the Naples Museum. Prototypes of the lighting fixtures in the Temple of the Scottish Rite, Washington, D. C.

ANCIENT ROMAN BRONZE CANDELABRA



From the Augustan Age. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Note the exquisite carving, and the winged heads growing out of lion legs



On the left, chair of priest of Dionysius. Middle, Pompeian table standard. On the right, base of candelabrum. From plaster casts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

ROMAN MARBLE FURNITURE OF THE FIRST CENTURY A. D.

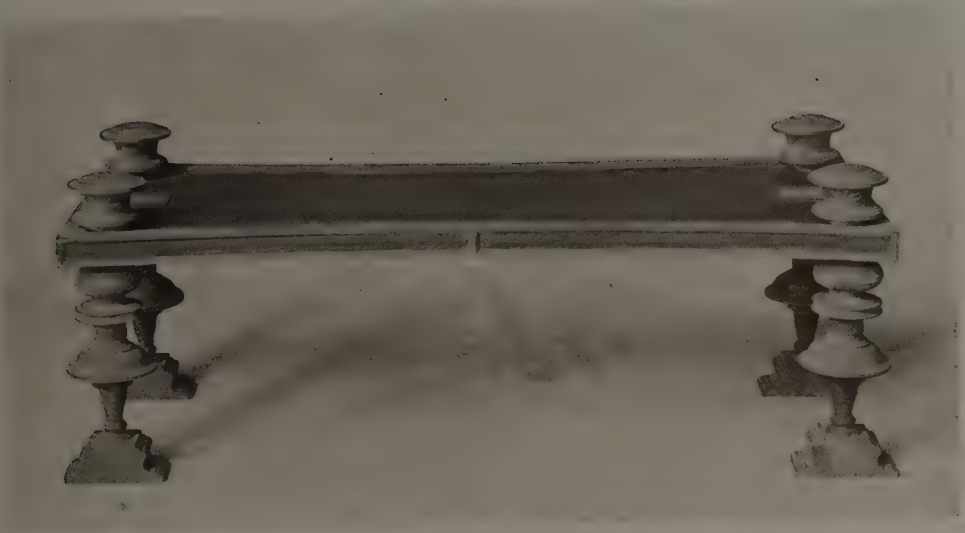
ANCIENT ROMAN BRONZE AND MARBLE TABLE IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

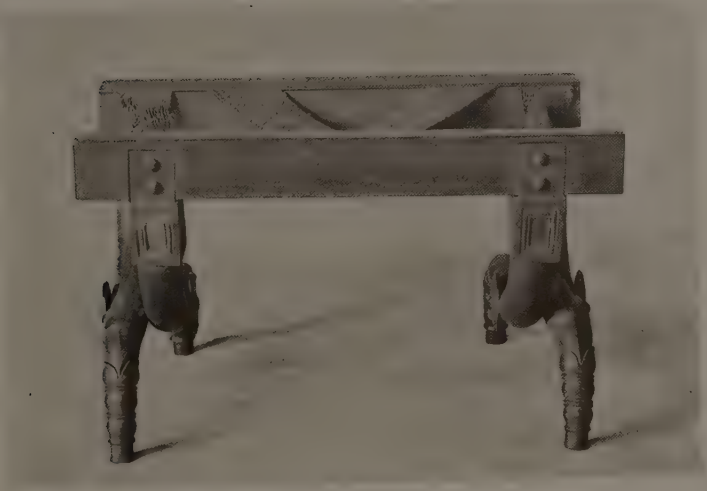
The table is made of five pieces, top, three legs, brace, all cast. It is 21 inches high, with top 25½ inches in diameter. It is lower than our tables because the Romans reclined at dinner on couches, instead of sitting in chairs

ANCIENT ROMAN BRONZE DINING ROOM TABLE FROM BOSCOREALE, IN THE FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, CHICAGO

From a reproduction in the Field Museum of Natural History. The frame is of bronze, and the top slides up and down. The original top inside the bronze frame was probably of wood and has been so restored. Note the four legs with horse's hoof below and horse's head above, and compare with the animal legs of ancient Egyptian furniture

ANCIENT ROMAN TABLE IN THE NAPLES MUSEUM





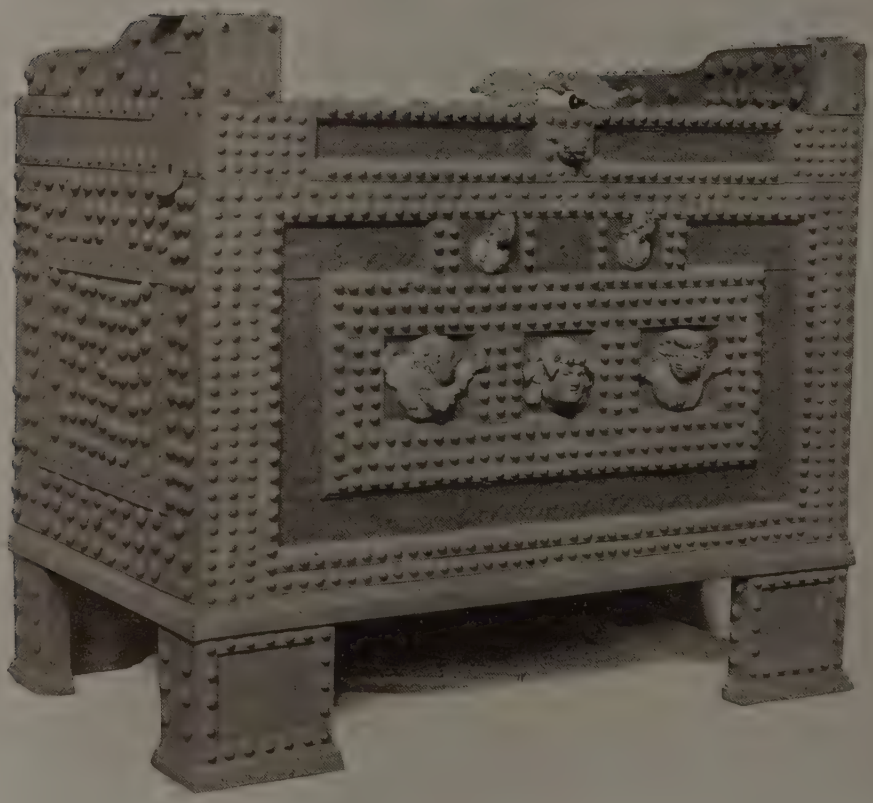
From reproductions in the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago. The Romans at dinner reclined on couches, each couch holding three. The wooden part of Pompeian furniture having uniformly crumbled when exposed to the air after being buried for 1,800 years, it has not always been easy to reassemble the bronze parts correctly

ANCIENT ROMAN STOOL AND COUCHES IN THE NAPLES MUSEUM

From reproductions in the Field Museum of Natural History. This furniture is exquisitely beautiful, but such designs could not be well executed in wood. The table on the left is supported by three floral stems carried by sphinxes who sit on slenderized lion legs. The upper part of the lion legs is elaborately ornamented with scrolls, wings, and palmettes in relief, and with an archaistic bearded head of Hercules. From the legs of the table on the right spring slender and graceful hounds. The main figure in the stand is Victory supporting a bearded Hermes, and standing upon the globe of the world. Probably the stand once had a small green marble top.

From reproductions in the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. The bronze-framed marble-top slides up and down. Out of each slenderized lion leg rises a youthful satyr holding a rabbit. The legs below the acanthus leaves are inlaid with metal, perhaps silver, as is the frame of the top. Of the chair on the right, only the bronze portions are ancient. The wood is modern restoration

ANCIENT ROMAN BRONZE TABLE AND CHAIR IN THE NAPLES MUSEUM



The chest was of wood sheathed with iron and trimmed with bronze. The lower row of bronze heads shows an ivy-covered nymph between two Cupids. The lid fastens at the ends.

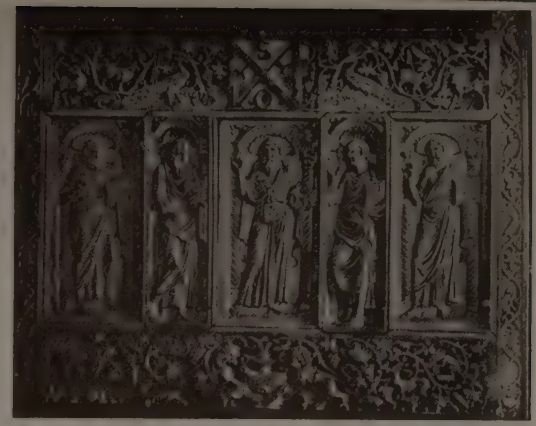
The bronze legs of the folding stool end in animal heads fancifully prolonged into a proboscis that rests on the floor. The carved design on the wooden restoration is said to have been copied from the original ivory frame

ANCIENT ROMAN CHEST AND X FOLDING STOOL IN THE NAPLES MUSEUM

Model, by Dwight Franklin, of the narthex (vestibule) of the famous cathedral of Santa Sophia erected in Constantinople in the Sixth Century A. D. by the Roman Emperor, Justinian

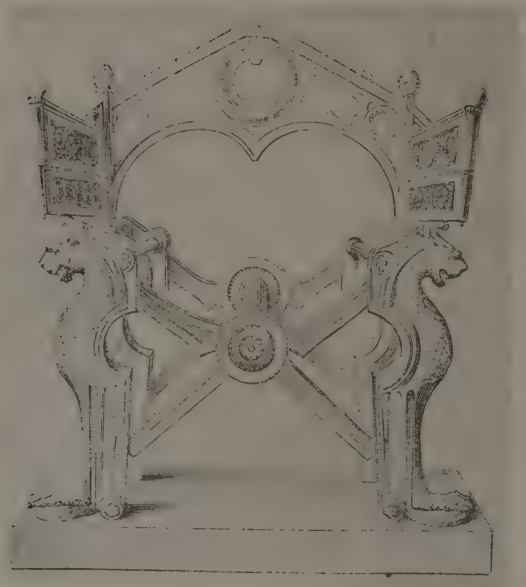
From mosaics in the Sixth Century church of San Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna. Above, chair of the Virgin inlaid with jewels and ivory, and made comfortable by a large, soft cushion. Below, chair of Christ, also with cushion, and inlaid with jewels and ivory, but with back posts carved

ANCIENT PICTURES OF BYZANTINE CHAIRS

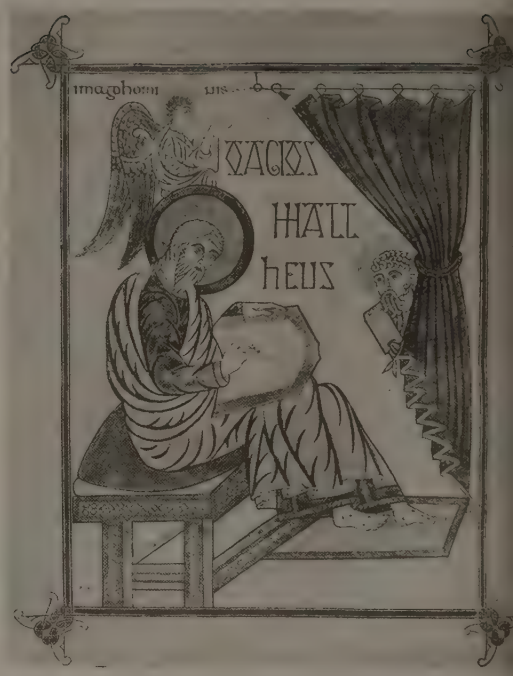


The chair of Maximian (archbishop of Ravenna in the time of the Emperor Justinian) in the Ravenna Cathedral

BYZANTINE CHAIR IN CARVED IVORY



Frankish Byzantine, gilt bronze chair in the Bibliothêque Nationale. Commonly called the Chair of King Dagobert



Inlaid bench from a Seventh Century British manuscrip

Chair of St. Peter, in the apse of the Vatican Basilica

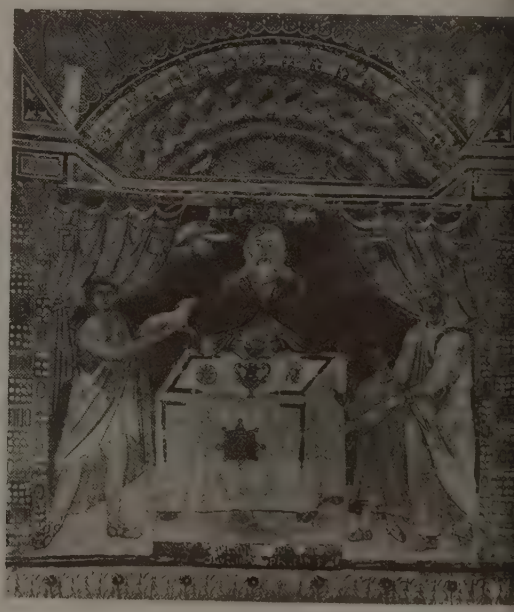
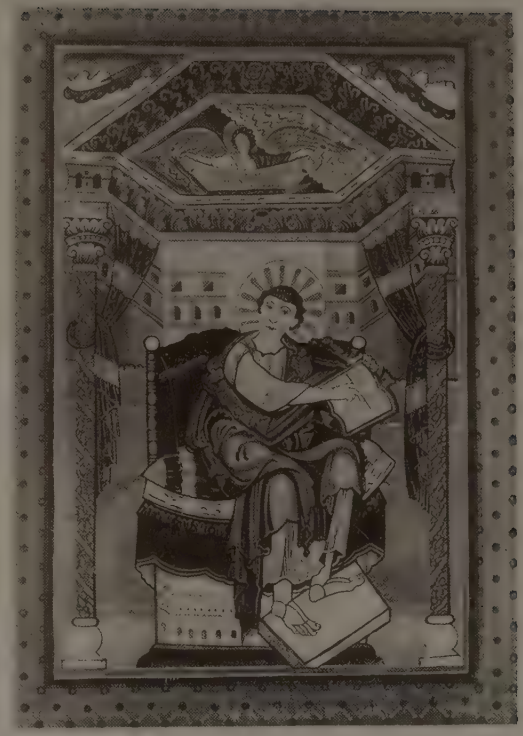


Table with embroidered table-cloth, pictured in a mosai at the Sixth Century church of San Apollinare in Classe Ravenna

BYZANTINE CHAIRS, BENCH AND TABLE

From a Ninth Century manuscript

From an Eighth Century manuscript



From a Ninth Century manuscript

BYZANTINE CHAIRS PICTURED IN ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS

CHAPTER III

From an illuminated manuscript of the period. Note the sideboard, the pillowed sofas on which the guests sit and the frame construction of the three tables

GOTHIC DINING ROOM TABLES OF THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER III

GOTHIC FURNITURE

French, French-Flemish, English, Spanish

Gothic is the style dominant in Western Europe in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries. Its influence is also marked in Italy in the Fourteenth Century. The style is called Gothic, not because the Goths had anything to do with it, but because of the contempt that the Italians of the Renaissance, felt for a style that was medieval and non-Roman. They used the term Gothic as a synonym of barbarous.

Gothic, however, is by no means a barbarous style. On the contrary, it is one of the most splendid styles the world has ever known. It is also one of the most distinctive, perhaps the most distinctive of all styles, in spirit and in execution.

Just as the soul of Classic is balance and symmetry, so the soul of Gothic is verticality and variety. Gothic buildings do not stick fast to the ground. Unlike Classic buildings, they seem to soar upward to the sky, accentuating height at the expense of breadth.

Gothic is primarily a French style. It is just as radically and completely a French style as were the later styles of Louis XIV, Louis XV and Louis XVI. In the Gothic centuries, the name for Gothic was "Opus Francigenum," French work. The Gothic of England, Germany, Spain and Italy trails that of France.

Already in Romanesque, the French had been leaders. The Romanesque of England, Sicily and Southern Italy is Norman French. The finest sculpture of the Romanesque Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries is French.

While Gothic is so largely Romantic, it has a Classic foundation. Gothic can be understood only by studying its developments out of Romanesque, which is a development from Barbaric Roman under Byzantine and Saracenic inspiration.

One result of the Crusades was the regeneration of Western Europe. When the Crusades began, at the end of the Eleventh Century, the civilization of France, England, Germany and Italy was vastly inferior to the civilization of the Byzantine Empire and also to the civilization of the Mohammedan countries, Persia, Syria, Egypt, Northern Africa and Spain. In the Near East, the Crusaders learned to appreciate higher standards of art, and returned home thrilled with admiration for Byzantine and Saracenic.

Gothic, then, is a French style developed from Romanesque by the Oriental spirit reborn in the West and made passionately Christian. But the foundation of Gothic is Classic, and, if it had not been for the Roman inheritance, Gothic as a style could never have developed.

In Gothic, all lines lead upward. This is especially true in the Gothic of the Fourteenth Century. The Gothic of the Thirteenth Century and the late Twelfth still retained much Romanesque. The Gothic of the Fifteenth Century was already well on the way toward Renaissance.

As far as Gothic furniture is concerned, the Fifteenth Century is the important century. Almost all of the ancient Gothic wooden furniture that remains to us was made in the Fifteenth Century, or early Sixteenth.

The Thirteenth Century had been the great Cathedral Century, the great Architectural Century, and a great Stained-Glass Century.

During the Fourteenth Century, stained glass developed marvelously, and the art of weaving large and splendid wall tapestries, with all the technique that distinguishes Gothic and later European tapestries from Egyptian, Coptic, Saracenic, Chinese and other primitive tapestries was developed. But nearly all of the important Gothic tapestries that have survived are from the Fifteenth Century.

The finest Gothic furniture is French or French-Flemish. When I use the term French-Flemish, I use it only to indicate a distinction that is not important until the end of the Fifteenth Century. French-Flemish Gothic is just as much French Gothic as is the Gothic of Paris, and more so than the Gothic of Southern France. Not until near the end of the Fifteenth Century, when the Netherlands came by marriage into the possession of the Hapsburgs, did Flemish, under German, Spanish and Italian influences, begin to separate itself definitely from French.

GOTHIC

French Gothic furniture of the Fifteenth and early Sixteenth Centuries is largely case furniture. That is to say, the chairs and benches and thrones are largely chests used as seats, often with high and canopied backs.

The ornament of Gothic furniture is derived from the ornament of Gothic architecture. The panels, carved or carved-and-pierced in low relief, are copied from the tracery-work of Cathedral stained-glass windows. The linen-fold which we find in the cathedrals, both in stone and wood and which was at the same time cheap to produce and beautiful, is constantly present on Gothic furniture.

Gothic columns and pilasters, finials and pendants were borrowed by Gothic furniture from church architecture.

Gothic moldings are radically different from Classic moldings. Classic moldings are full and round. Gothic moldings are thin and sharp, and cast shadows making them look even thinner and sharper than they really are.

Gothic furniture of the late Fifteenth Century already shows the influence of the approaching Renaissance. Horizontal lines and moldings which were abhorred by the Gothic of the Fourteenth Century are introduced with considerable freedom.

Gothic of the Fifteenth Century is much more of a decorative style than was the Gothic of the Thirteenth Century. Compared with the earlier Gothic, it is almost Rococo. Ornament, in its effort to achieve naturalistic beauty, sometimes loses dignity. Yet this was the century of the great painters, the Van Dycks, Roger van der Weyden and Hans Memling, and while we may admire the architectural perfections of the earlier Gothic centuries, we cannot help admitting that, decoratively and as far as furniture and tapestries were concerned, the great Gothic century was the Fifteenth Century.

Most Gothic furniture is made of oak, with metal mounts of iron superbly wrought. Ancient Gothic hinges and locks are far superior to any that can be copied or originated today, except perhaps by some of the Spanish smiths with traditions inherited from centuries of Spanish superiority in ironwork.

Gothic illuminated manuscripts are of the greatest help in studying the furniture forms of all the Gothic centuries, but especially of the Fifteenth. Here we see interiors of all kinds installed with furniture that is both useful and beautiful. Here we have an opportunity to see just how Gothic furniture was used in homes.

DECORATIVE FURNITURE

Our illustrations from Fifteenth Century Gothic manuscripts show a wealth of Gothic furniture. They also show it in use. Evidently chairs were few and benches were many. Even at table, we see the guests on long high-backed seats with cushions to make them comfortable. The light but solid frame construction of the long slender tables is noteworthy. The canopied beds, as well as many of the benches with backs and arms, seem to have been more heavily framed and less board-like than most of the Gothic furniture that has come down to us from the Late Fifteenth Century and Early Sixteenth. The desk upon which Jean Mielot writes is of interesting construction, and the ink bottles are placed conveniently. An imposing throne-chair is the one shown in the picture of a Gothic school room.

What these throne-chairs were to the other rooms, the high-backed sideboard, or dresser, seems to have been to the dining room. On it were displayed row upon row of the finest dishes, mostly in silver or other metal gilded to look like gold.

The actual service at dinner was simple. The plates were flat and square and small. Wine cups were large and shaped like flat bowls. Chickens and meat were served on a large round platter.

The detail of the linen table-cloths, sometimes plain but sometimes a damask and fringed, is interesting. Interesting also are the long straight Gothic plaits in which hang both table-cloths and bed-spreads.

One of our illustrations shows a crib, with a baby in it, being rocked by a lady who pulls a string attached to one of the corner posts.

From an illuminated manuscript of the middle of the Fifteenth Century. Above, the teacher elaborately gowned sits on a canopied bench, with rich pomegranate-figured velvet behind her. Her ink bottle stands on the desk, ready for the quill pen with which she is writing. The scholars sit on backless benches, but two of them have foot pillows. The window is paned with glass, and rather elaborately leaded at the top. Below, linen table-cloths falling in Gothic plaits, and with embroidered border, cover tables with straight legs, tied together shoes and long stretchers. The guests sit on benches with backs, and having no forks use knives and fingers. The sideboard is haughty with rich plates, and Discord offers the apple that caused the elopement of Helen of Troy

GOTHIC SCHOOL ROOM AND DINING ROOM FURNITURE

From an illuminated manuscript of the Fifteenth Century. Above, Jean Mielot writing the manuscript for Duke Philip the Good, who watches from the right. Note the construction of the writing desk, and of the high-backed bench with lion finials. Note also the folding stool. Below, Jason making love to Medea. Here we have an opportunity to study not only sofa and bench, and high-backed chair with pillow, and bed with canopy and draperies and Gothic, pleated spread and pillow and bolster, but also the door and doorway, the grilled window with shutters, the floor and the ceiling

GOTHIC BED ROOM FURNITURE AND WRITING DESK

From the Story of Helayne, an illuminated manuscript made in the middle of the Fifteenth Century for Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. Above, we see the author presenting the book to Duke Philip. The furniture consists of a long carved sofa, with pillow, and a side-board with high back. In the room below, twins have just been born. The mother reposed in the carved bed whose spread lies in Gothic folds. The canopy drapery is rolled up in the way then usual. Note also the chimneypiece, the high-backed chair, and especially the cradle

In the Dreicer Collection

Chest front

FRENCH GOTHIC CUPBOARD IN CARVED OAK

With tracery work and linen-fold panels. In the Hoentschel Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art

FRENCH-FLEMISH GOTHIC CANOPIED CHAIR

Oak credence with excellent hardware

French-Flemish cupboard with tracery and linen-fold panels and attractive iron hardware

GOTHIC CUPBOARD AND CREDENCE

French-Flemish choir stalls in the Hoentschel Collection

French-Flemish choir stalls in the Hoentschel Collection

Front and back views of an English Gothic oak table

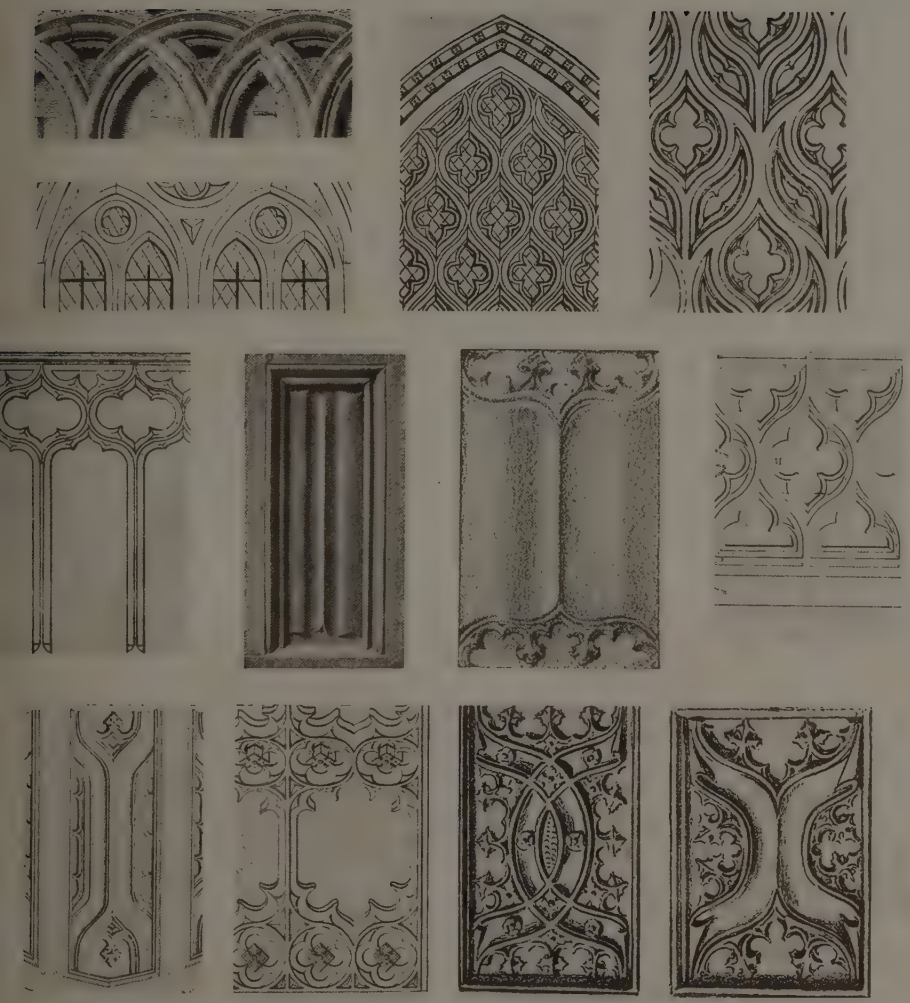
French Gothic wood carvings from Abbeville. Assembled as an armorer's shop in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

French throne chair

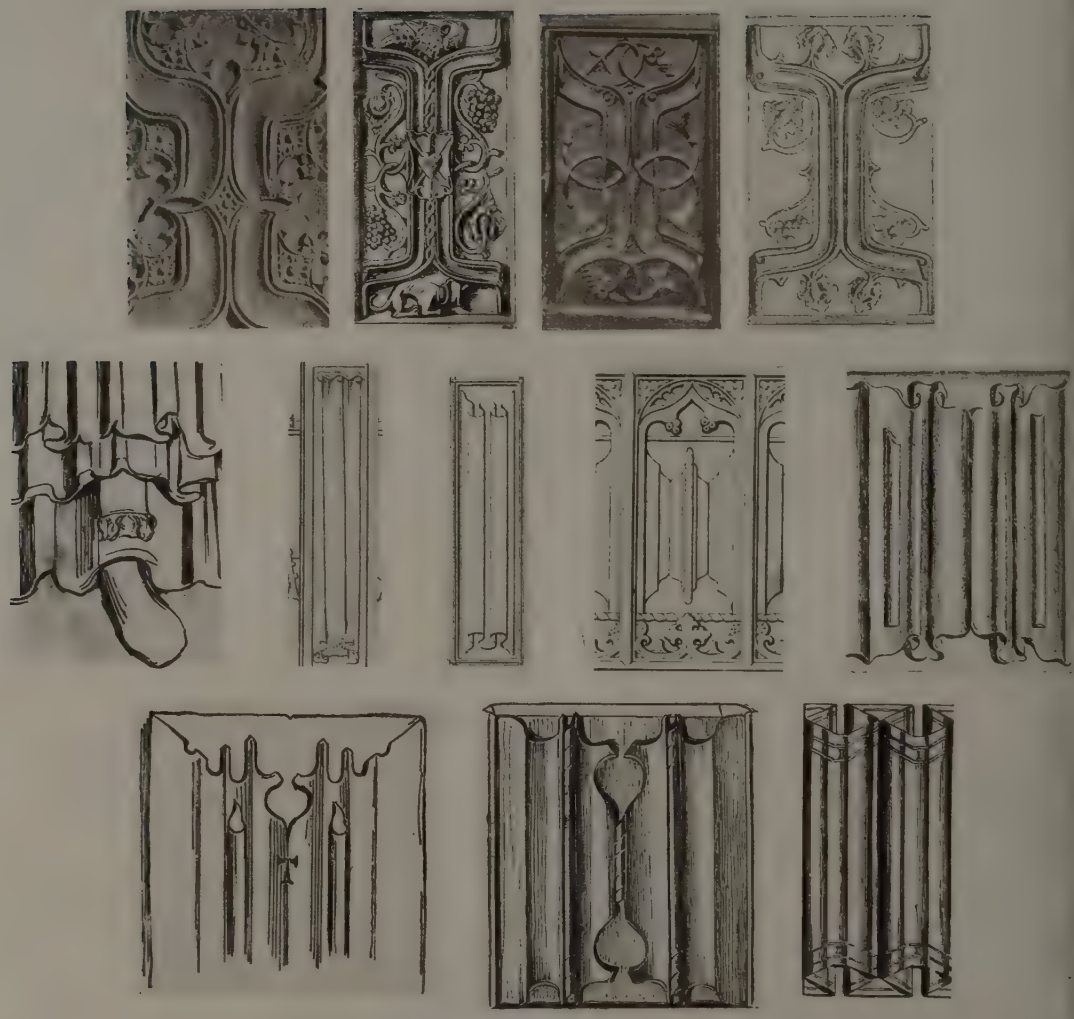
English cupboard

French cupboard

FRENCH AND ENGLISH GOTHIC FURNITURE

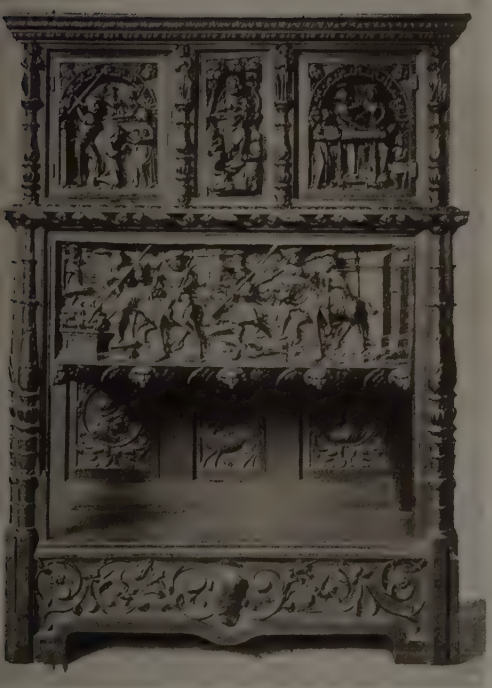


GOTHIC TRACERY AND LINEN-FOLD ORNAMENT



DETAILS OF GOTHIC LINEN-FOLD ORNAMENT

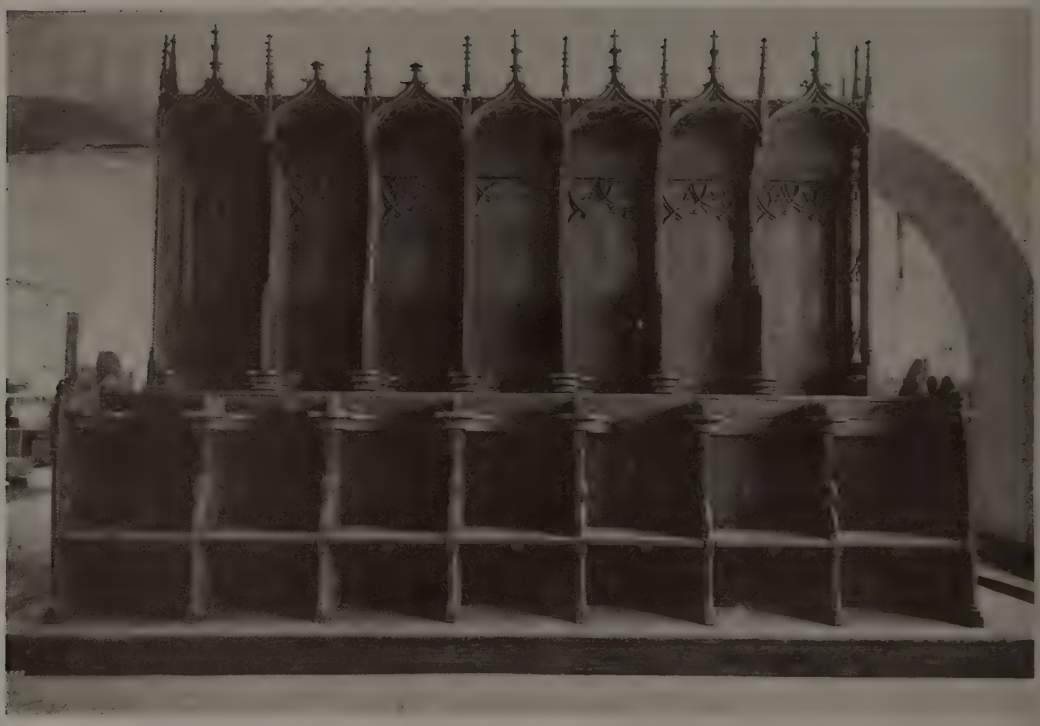
Fourteenth Century Gothic small carved chest, picturing in the second panel from the left the story of Aristotle caught by Alexander in the act of playing the fool for Camaspe. The hardware of the chest is of extraordinary beauty and excellence. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art



Early Renaissance cupboard from the Mrs. Chauncey Blair Collection

Gothic throne from Lorraine

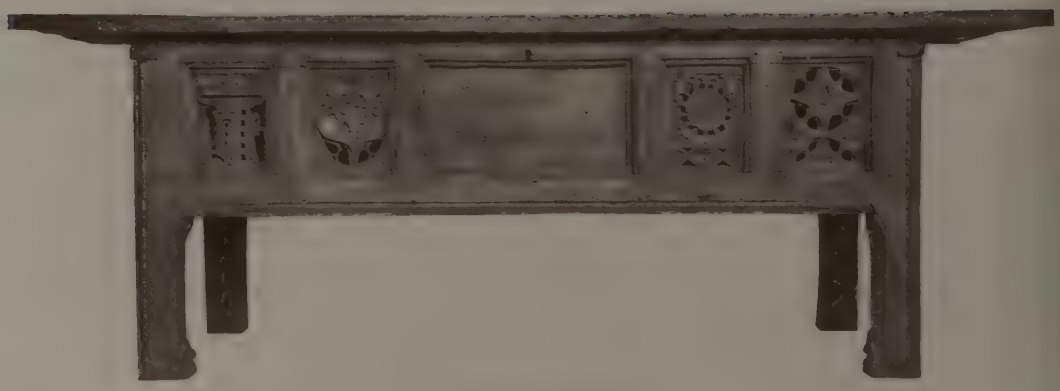
FRENCH GOTHIC CONTRASTED WITH FRENCH RENAISSANCE



French choir stalls in the Hoentschel Collection

Miniature model of Penshurst Hall by Dwight Franklin. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art

ENGLISH GOTHIC CUPBOARD



Reconstructed table

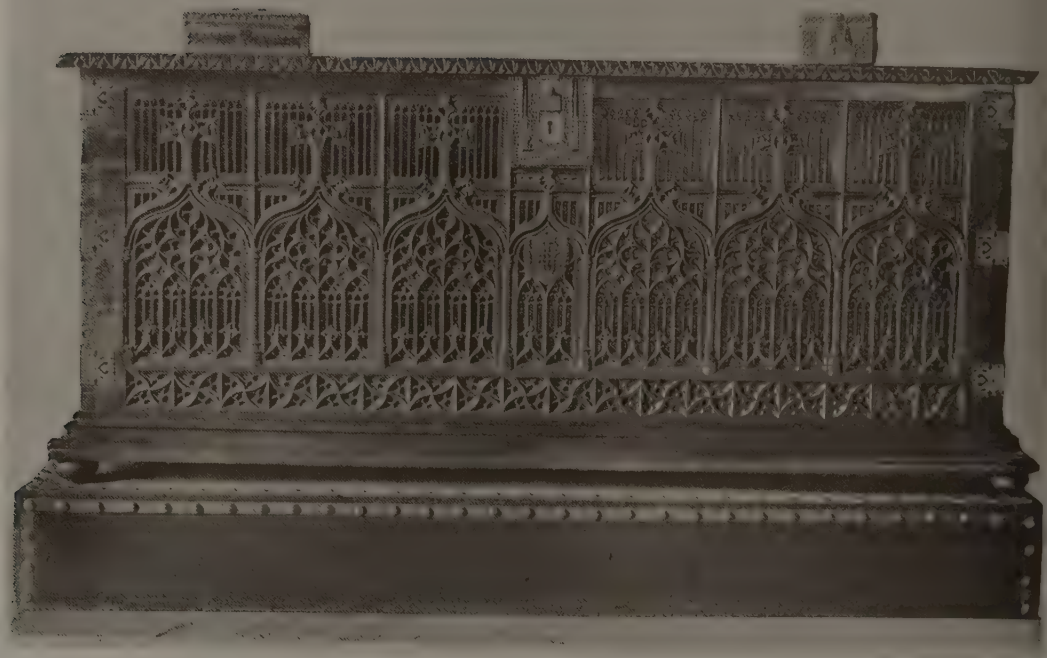
Dole cupboard with pierced tracery

ENGLISH GOTHIC CUPBOARD AND TABLE

Exhibition of the Spanish Society of the Friends of Art, Madrid, 1917

SPANISH GOTHIC CHESTS

An extraordinary example of the skill of Spanish workers in iron. Upholstered in red velvet. From the collection of Don Juan Lafora



Elaborately carved with window tracery in the manner of French Gothic. Iron lock and other hardware of unusual excellence. From the collection of the Marquesa de Alcubierre

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(1) and (3) designed by Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson; (2) and (4), by Charles R. Lamb

MODERN AMERICAN GOTHIC CHURCH FURNITURE

CHAPTER IV

Two panels from one of a pair of Eighteenth Century incised lacquer screens

ANCIENT CHINESE SCREEN IN THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM

CHAPTER IV

ORIENTAL FURNITURE

Persian, Chinese, Japanese

Chinese is the only Oriental furniture from which we have much to learn. The other Asiatic nations east of Persia either sit on the floor like the Japanese or follow the Chinese, or show successive waves of Babylonian, Greek, Sassanid, and Persian influence. I am sorry not to have been able to secure good illustrations of early Indian furniture, much of which is pictured in the decorative and architectural sculpture, and some of which looks not unlike the furniture in Assyrian bas-reliefs. I also regret not having been able to show more Mohammedan furniture, especially the case pieces rich with ivory and other inlay. But as little or none of his furniture seems to have had much influence on European and American furniture except through Spanish and Portuguese, perhaps the omission is pardonable. None of the Asiatic nations ever developed the general use of chairs and tables and two-story cabinets to the extent now common in Europe and America. Highly developed furniture seems never to have been used in any country except in connection with highly developed architecture.

Sitting or squatting on the floor and on divans is a favorite Persian habit. In spite of the architectural inheritance of Persia from Babylonia and Assyria and Egypt, Persia is an Oriental rather than an Occidental country.

Our illustrations show Persians squatting on rugs and mattresses and divans, and leaning on large soft cushions, with food served on trays or on low stands. Under such conditions of life, little furniture is necessary or desirable except chests and small cabinets. Furniture such as we use becomes necessary only when people stop sitting on the floor and begin to sit from sixteen to twenty inches above the floor. Some of our Japanese illustrations illustrate the "Squat" Age.

One of our Egyptian illustrations shows the "Squat" Age side by side with the later Age.

Chinese furniture, like Chinese painting and Chinese porcelain and Chinese silks, excels. The construction is admirable and the ornament appropriate. The forms, in which straight lines predominate are sensible and comfortable. Even the forms obviously influenced from Europe have gained by the application of Chinese taste. Even modern Chinese furniture, made for either European or Chinese use in China, has many of the excellencies of the Chinese furniture that went before.

A distinctive characteristic are the numerous fret forms in the carved ornament, which suggest the origin of Chinese Chippendale. The metalwork on cabinets is often superb; locks and hinges are made with consummate skill.

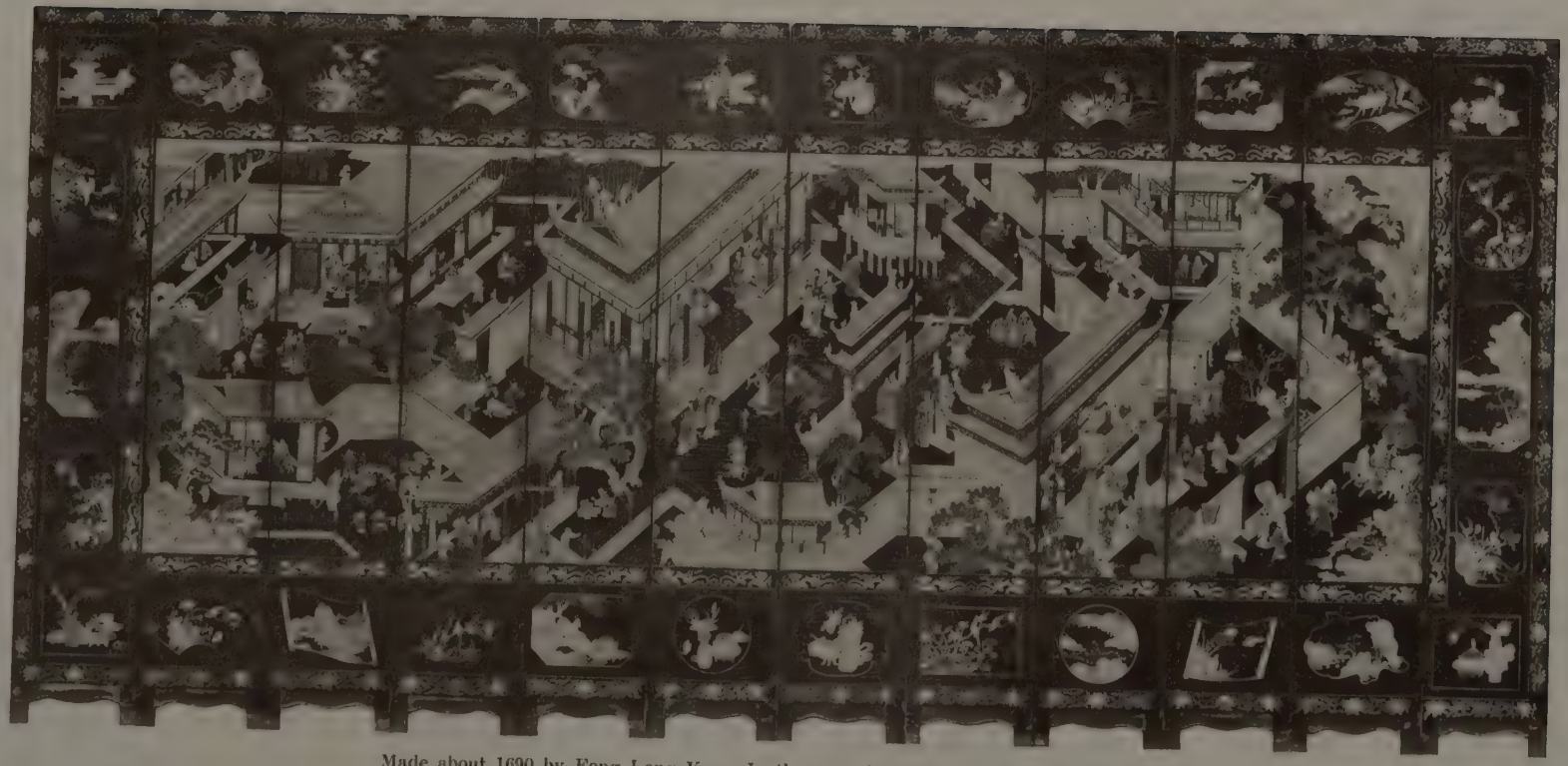
About Chinese lacquer screens there can, of course, be only one opinion. They are brilliant works of art. A screen like that of Kang Hsi, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and illustrated in this volume, commands universal admiration. It dates from 1690 and is the work of Fong Long Kon of Fatshan. It shows the Emperor Kang Hsi seated in the central partition of the Summer Palace, entertained by dancing girls. The perspective and point of view are fascinating, and illustrate what Gothic tapestries also illustrate, that modern photographic and geometrical perspective is not necessary for the production of beautiful pictures. No wonder that French and English artists and artisans of the Eighteenth Century became enamoured of Chinese lacquer work, and have been imitating it ever since.

An Eighteenth Century Englishman, whose pictures of Chinese furniture in his "Designs for Chinese Buildings" (London 1757) are interesting, is the architect Sir William Chambers who at the age of sixteen visited Canton where he made the drawings afterwards published in his book. The Chinese pagoda that he erected at Kew still survives.

Our illustrations show splendid examples of modern Chinese lacquered furniture made in New York by a European long resident in China.

Chinese houses and pleasure pavilions illustrated in color on an old Chinese wall paper painted for the English market in the reign of Kang Hsi. Now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, after hanging two centuries in England

PICTURES OF CHINESE HOUSES



Made about 1690 by Fong Long Kon. In the central court the Emperor Kang Hsi is seen seated on his throne, entertained by fair dancers and musicians. See opposite page

ANCIENT CHINESE LACQUER SCREEN IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

The Emperor Kang Hsi and his courtiers entertained by fair musicians and dancers

DETAIL OF ANCIENT CHINESE LACQUER SCREEN SHOWN ON PRECEDING PAGE

From the back of the Kang Hsi screen illustrated on the two preceding pages

SHOWING THE TEXTURE OF ANCIENT CHINESE LACQUER

Carved wardrobe, chair, and small tables in a New York apartment dining room

Carved chair and small table showing European influence

Carved cabinet and chairs with characteristic Chinese hardware and upholstery

In the New York apartment of the French Consul General, Gaston Liebert, who was stationed for many years in China. View from living room into dining room

Dining room of the apartment illustrated on the opposite page. The table shows what happens to a European model when a Chinaman interprets it in Chinese

In the New York studio of the artists, Bolton and Francis Jones

ANCIENT CHINESE CARVED CABINET

By Pieter Meyer, of Greenwich Village, New York

Black and ivory bed, with decorations incised as in Coromandel lacquer

Black and ivory bed, with decorations incised in the style of Coromandel lacquer

Furniture in yellow, with tops in Chinese red. Floral decorations in gold and polychrome. Lamps in red lacquer, with black sateen shades

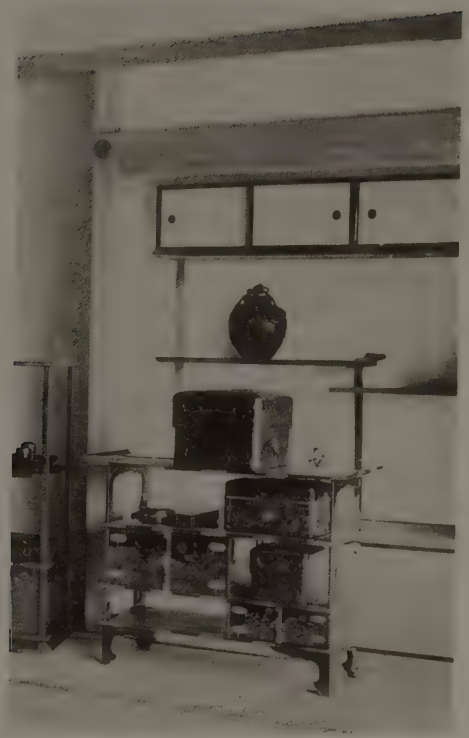
MODERN AMERICAN CHINESE LACQUERED FURNITURE

The home of Soichiro Asano in Tokio. Above, front view of the exterior. Below, the entrance hall. The paintings are by Kobori Tomone. Note the absence of furniture

The ceiling

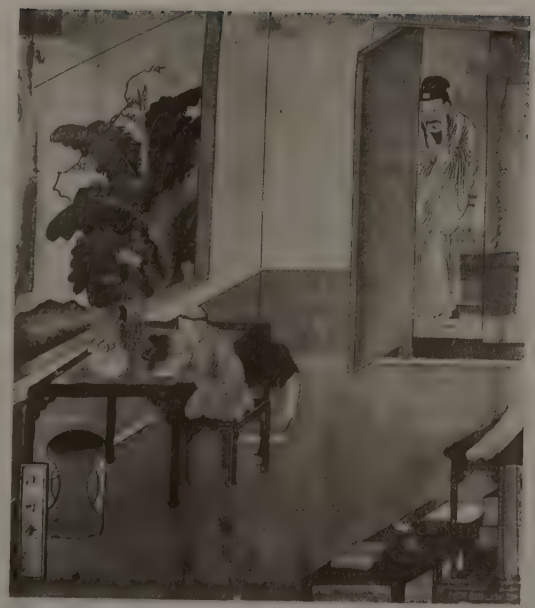
The show end of the room, with alcoves for the display of art objects and curios.
In the residence of Soichiro Asano, president of the Pacific Steamship Company

MODERN JAPANESE RECEPTION ROOM



A group of lacquered cabinets as used in luxurious Japanese homes

Fifteenth Century cabinet, with gold and silver raised lacquer, and gilt and engraved brass hardware. Like most Japanese furniture it is of miniature size, being only fifteen inches high. Unlike the Chinese the Japanese sit on the floor and use knee-high furniture and little of that



Painted panel from a Chinese lantern in the American Museum of Natural History

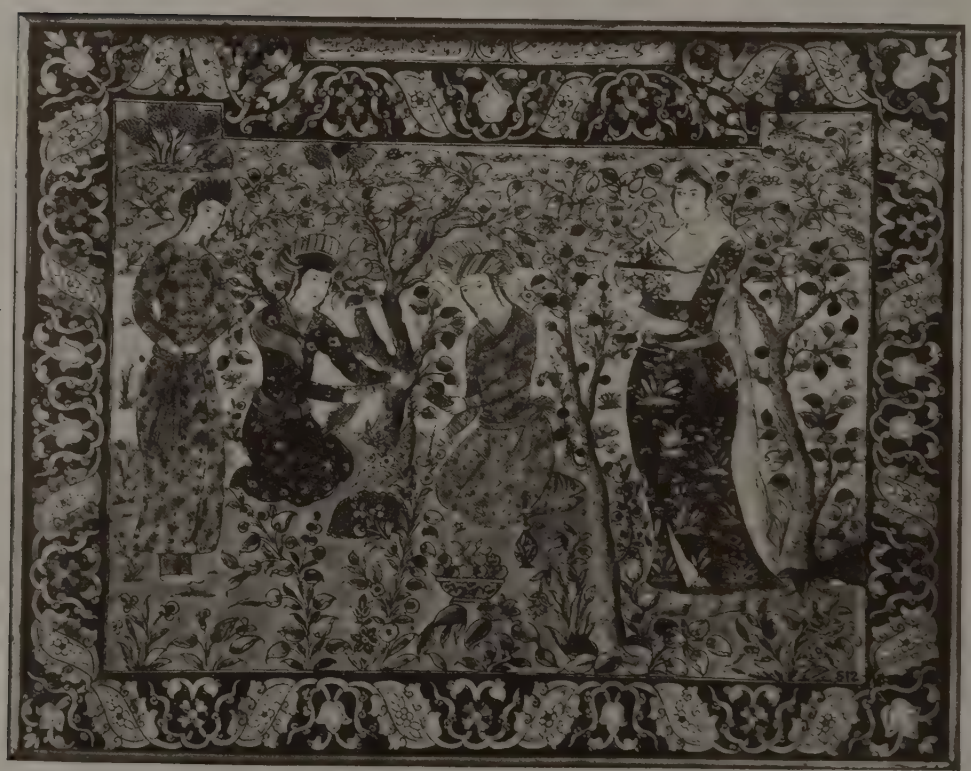
Photograph of a Japanese bookkeeper at work

Painted panel from a Chinese lantern in the American Museum of Natural History

The Japanese, like the primitive peoples generally, squat on the floor. The Chinese sit on chairs, stools, and benches, as we do

SITTING POSTURE OF CHINESE CONTRASTED WITH JAPANESE

From Persian manuscripts of the Fourteenth, Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries. As in Japanese interiors, so here, there is little furniture. Chairs are conspicuous by their absence



Above, interior from a Sixteenth Century manuscript.
Below, a Persian tile of the Early Seventeenth Century

PERSIAN TILES, LACQUER WORK AND TEXTILES RICH WITH COLOR

CHAPTER V

Bound in iron and painted in polychrome, with fleurs-de-lis in gesso low relief

FLORENTINE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CHEST IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

CHAPTER V

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE FURNITURE

During the past decade an almost incredible quantity of fine Italian Renaissance furniture has emigrated from Italy to America. At sales like the Davanzati, the Bardini, the Volpi, Americans have had an opportunity not only to study but also to purchase splendid examples of the work of Italian furniture makers of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries. At the recent "Loan Exhibition of the Arts of the Italian Renaissance" in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, it was possible to see some of these treasures that have been acquired by American collectors.

Personally, I prefer the furniture of the Italian Renaissance to that of any other period. It delights me that this preference is frequently felt and expressed in the United States, and that there is here more love of the Classic and less wandering after strange gods than in any other country in the world.

The sympathy between Americans and Italians is great, not only on account of the number of Italians who become Americanized and settle in America, but also and especially on account of those who become Americanized but return to Italy. This renders especially warm the welcome that Americans find in Italy, whether visiting in the large cities or the tiny hamlets. It gave me a positive thrill, a year ago in Pesto, where wonderful temples still preserve the memory of the Greeks who lived there in the Sixth Century B. C., to find that the Italian foreman of the local electric light plant had learned his trade in Michigan.

Much of the success of Mussolini in his efforts to regenerate Italy, and inspire Italians to the splendid activities and great deeds of other days, I attribute to the enthusiastic support of immigrants repatriated from America.

But while Italy can perhaps learn more from us than from any other country, I know that we must for many years continue to go to school to Italian painting, architecture and furniture. Italian houses, churches and museums fascinate us, and justly.

In the Sixteenth Century, Renaissance was the dominant art of the world, but in Italy had already been the dominant art in the Fifteenth Century. In other words, the Italian Renaissance covers two centuries, while the Renaissance in France, Flanders, England and Spain covers only one century, the Sixteenth.

In the Fifteenth Century, the capital city of Italian Renaissance art was Florence; in the Sixteenth Century, Rome. So that, when I speak of the Florentine Renaissance, I mean the Italian Renaissance of the Fifteenth Century; and when I speak of the Roman Renaissance, I mean the Italian Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century.

The perfections of the art of the Florentine Renaissance, as accomplished not only in Florence but also in the many other cities of northern and central Italy, was such as to give the period a distinction second to none. This applies not only to painting and sculpture but also to architecture and furniture.

The Florentine Renaissance is radically different in character and infinitely more spiritual than the Roman Renaissance. Its knowledge of ancient Roman and Greek forms was less, but its feeling and creative ability was much greater. Without bothering after pedagogical accuracy in details, it achieved Classic rhythm.

The Florentine Renaissance is rich with inheritance from the arts of the eastern Mediterranean, Byzantine, Saracenic, Sicilian, but its proportions are so exquisite, and its compositions so simple, that the furniture of its creation makes the furniture of the Roman Renaissance tawdry by comparison.

Four periods in the world's history have been distinguished for accentuation of straight line effects, the Age of Pericles, the Gothic Age, the Age of Louis XVI, and the Florentine Renaissance. In Gothic, to be sure, vertical lines have been accentuated at the expense of horizontal, and we have a style that compared with other styles is perpendicular. But in Louis XVI, and in Greek of the Fifth Century B. C., and in Florentine Renaissance, we have the accentuation, not only of vertical lines to give upward movement, but also of horizontal lines to imprison the vertical lines and establish the symmetrical repose that is the Classic ideal. All Italian Renaissance furniture is

Classic furniture, but the classicism of the Roman Renaissance is less simple and less severe than that of the Florentine Renaissance, and under the impulsion of Michelangelo was moving toward the sinuosities of Baroque.

Italian Renaissance is a Classic style. It is held to earth by the strength of its horizontals. Just as Gothic furniture usually is high, and tends to look high even when it is low, so Italian Renaissance furniture is usually low and tends to look low even when it is high. This is made clear by accompanying illustrations of Italian Renaissance chests, cabinets, tables and chairs, almost always made of walnut.

One of the most important pieces of Italian Renaissance furniture is the chest (cassone). In the Middle Ages, Europeans lived in their chests, just as now we sometimes speak of travelers living in their trunks. When nobles went from the winter residence in the city to the summer residence in the country, they carried with them in their chests, drawn on ox wagons, not only clothing and money and jewels but also linen and bedding, tapestries and other draperies, dishes and cooking utensils. Chairs and benches being few, they used the chests at home as well as at inns, to sit on, eat on, and even to sleep on.

In the Fifteenth Century, life having become more settled, the chests became less movable and more luxurious. The panels of some were adorned with exquisite intarsia. Others were enriched with sculpture in wood, others with ornament in gesso relief, and still others with paintings by famous masters.

A royal development from the cassone is the Florentine cassapanca, or chest-bench. It is a large, low, flat-top chest, standing on a low platform, enclosed on three sides by straight back and arms that rise from the platform. In the Fifteenth Century there was little carving, and the other ornament was intarsia. In the Sixteenth Century the flat shapes gave way to more movement, curves began to be introduced into the outlines, and carving crowded out intarsia. While a cassapanca, with rich crimson velvet cushion and pillow is extraordinarily beautiful, the seat is hard from the luxurious modern point of view. This is easily corrected. Remove the lid and a little more and set a flat-springed mattress down into the chest part. Then you have a sofa soft enough to use as a bed, but in beauty still a cassapanca.

Like the cassapanca, the chairs of the Italian Renaissance are more beautiful than comfortable, although when properly handled

they can be made comfortable. The two principal types were the straight chair and the X chair, the latter being developed from the ancient Roman folding stool. Both types of chairs were often upholstered with velvet and other textiles, fringes, tassels, and nails having large gold and bronze heads. The woodwork of the stretchers was exceedingly simple, sometimes the posts carrying the arms in front were turned, and usually the back posts terminated in conventionally curved acanthus leaf brackets. Sometimes beautiful bronze finials took the place of these brackets. Often, a shoe on each side of the chair carried the feet terminating in front in lion's paws seldom carved with any semblance to nature. As the Sixteenth Century advanced, the use, in front, of wide carved and pierced splats became more common, the arms were more often softened into slender S curves and the backs leaned more away from the perpendicular.

One of the most magnificent of the Florentine beds is that formerly in the Davanzati Palace, but now in a splendid Park Avenue apartment in New York, where the owner uses its wealth of surrounding chests as a convenient storehouse for telephone and wardrobe. This bed illustrates splendidly the passion for thin, straight lines that dominated the Florentine Renaissance. It illustrates also the passion for the horizontal that dominates all Classic but especially the Classic of this period. About this bed there is no restlessness, no disturbance, no unnecessary movement. It is the most reposeful bed that I know.

The large rectangular tables of the Italian Renaissance are incomparably beautiful. Their proportions are uniformly so just, the carving is so appropriate and so effective though so simple, and the walnut of which they are made so gloriously free from imperfections, that I can never persuade myself to prefer to them the noble tables of the French Renaissance, in spite of the infinite superiority of the latter in rich carving. Among the most perfect Florentine Renaissance tables in America are four from a monastery at Siena, now divided among different owners, and one of them shortened to meet the exigencies of the space where it is installed. The shortening was executed with great skill, and one of the surplus pieces of ancient wood has been transformed into the only ancient Italian Renaissance telephone shelf with which I am acquainted. Another of the surplus pieces is a hall shelf carrying a superb small majolica plate from the Morgan Collection, used as a card tray.

Some of the large Italian Renaissance tables, like some of the

chests, are copied almost directly from Roman originals in marble, but a majority of them, while suggesting Classic ancestry, have been simplified to meet the requirements of Florentine taste.

Quite as interesting as the larger ones, are many of the smaller rectangular tables and many of those of octagonal shape.

Delightful in proportions, and exquisite though simple and inexpensive in workmanship, are the sideboards and cabinets and desks and bookcases of the Italian Renaissance, often enriched with intarsia. The plain, round pulls, whether in wood or bronze, are always just the right size, and the panels are always just the right shape. They demonstrate beyond contradiction the blessed fact that what is worth paying for, in millinery or furniture, is taste. The value of the raw materials counts for something, the perfection of the workmanship counts for more, but rhythm of form and perfection of ornament and texture count for most.

Italian Renaissance cabinets are useful as well as beautiful. Their numerous shelves and drawers offer much space for the convenient storage of silver and linen and books and music and other household necessities. They are easily transformed internally to carry the most modern inventions. The finest phonograph I know is an Italian Sixteenth Century commode with side and front doors as well as lid selected for its suitable dimensions as well as for its singularly and unexpectedly delicate flat carving, crimson velvet and gold finish of metal above and ancient-style coarse damask below give richness of color to the compartments that carry the books of records and the needle and self-stopping, electrically impelled disk. The ancient hinges and the large key are iron with the faintest suggestion of polychrome still remaining.

Many of the low and small Italian Renaissance side chairs are rich with spindles, especially in the back, but the spindles of course are always slender and regular as compared with the Baroque spindles of the Seventeenth Century.

Benches and stools were in common use during the Italian Renaissance, especially at the dinner table, chairs being reserved for the favored few. During the Sixteenth Century, the sgabello (stool), made entirely of wood, was usually overloaded with carving. Whether with back or without, the sgabello is one of the most uncomfortable pieces of furniture ever invented, although beautifully decorative when arranged alongside wall or table.

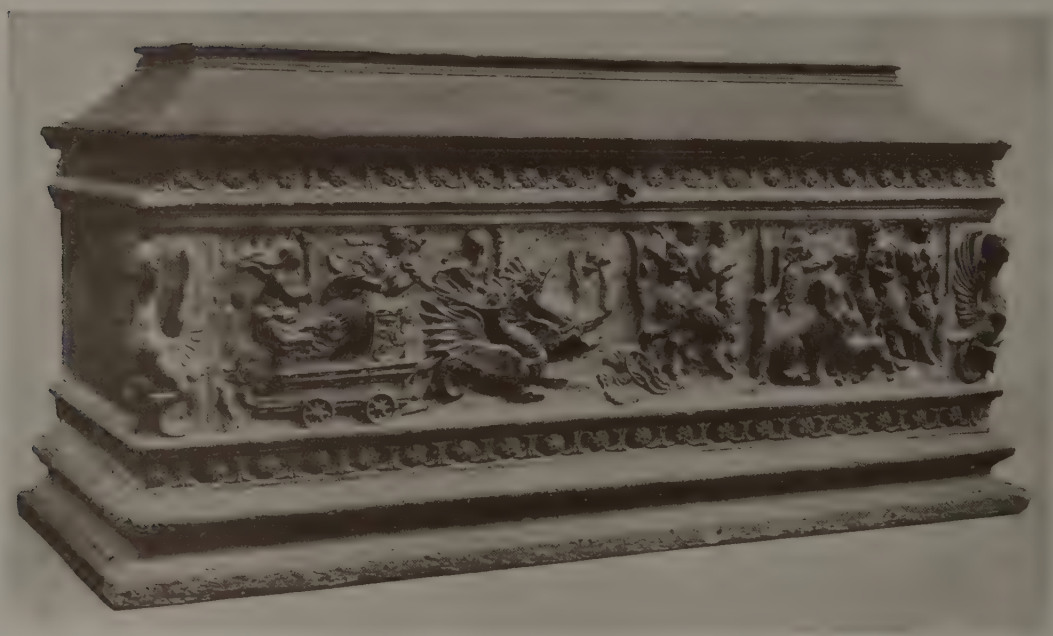
"St. Ursula's Dream," in the Venice Academy. Note the rich inlay on the box of the bedstead, and on the front of the bench that lines the wall. The arms and back of the chair on the farther side of the bed are also inlaid, apparently with ivory. The architecture of the bed with its round-arched headboard, is imposing. The slenderness of the turned bedposts is striking. The working furniture—stool, writing table with fringed cover, and small cabinet—is small and comparatively unimportant, but the cabinet is inlaid

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE FURNITURE AS PICTURED BY THE VENETIAN PAINTER, CARPACCIO

Made in Florence about 1475. Carved and gilt walnut,
with painted panel picturing the Capture of Trebizond

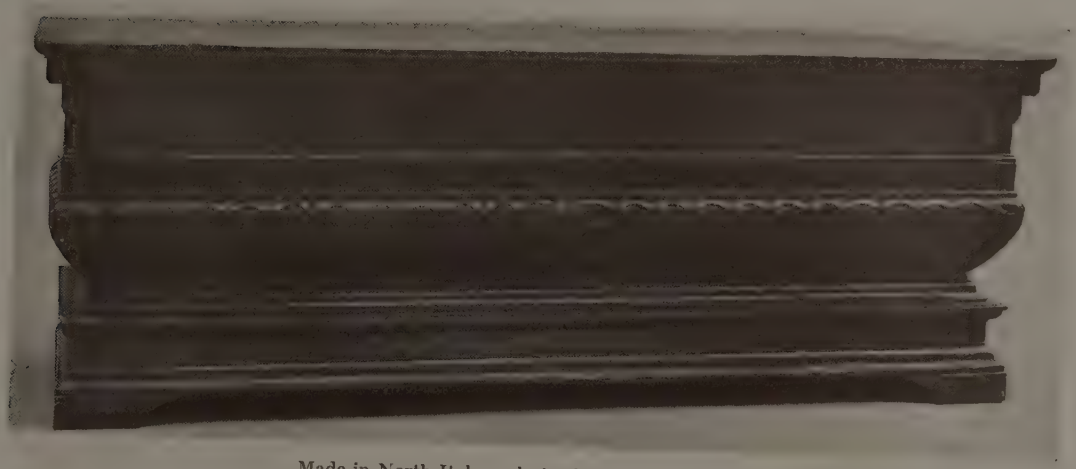
ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CASSONE IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Sixteenth Century, with ornament in carved wood



Late Fifteenth Century, with ornament in gesso. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Made in Florence about 1550



Made in North Italy early in the Sixteenth Century

Made in Italy early in the Sixteenth Century

Made in Umbria in the Sixteenth Century

Plain on the outside (see above) but the inside of the lid brilliant with painted polychrome. In the collection of H. L. Duhring

ITALIAN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY WALNUT CASSONE

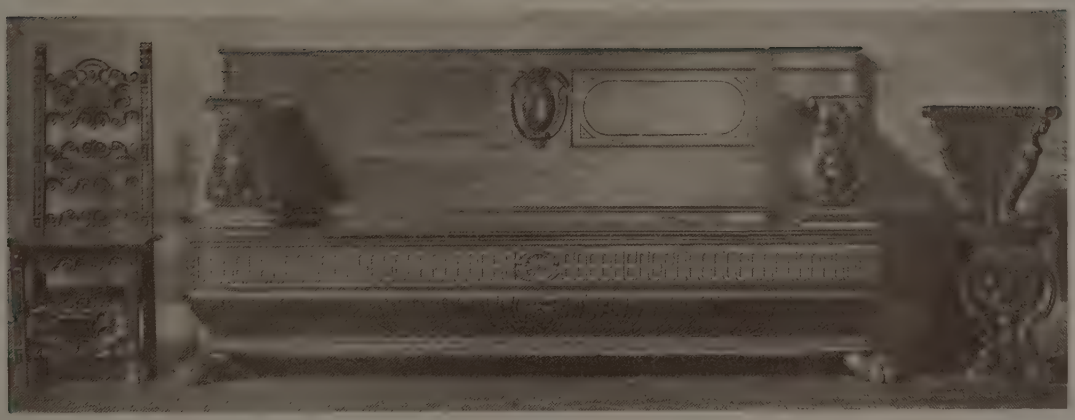
Both in the collection of George Howe, Philadelphia.
The polychrome painted panels of the chest are splendid

As it was when installed in a salon of the Davanzati Palace, Florence

As it was installed in the second-floor great hall of the Davanzati Palace, Florence. The tapestry at the end is French-Flemish, Late Gothic from the beginning of the Sixteenth Century

Modern American reproduction from a Davanzati Palace original

As it was installed in a chamber of the Davanzati Palace, Florence.
The bed is now in an apartment on Park Avenue, New York City



Florentine cassapanca and chairs

Florentine sideboard from the Davanzati Palace

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(3) Upholstered with gold-stamped leather; the others, with characteristic red velvet and fringe

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CHAIRS IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

(1) Brass and iron chair in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Made for the Celso Amerigo Turchi, abbot of Siena in 1601

(2) Dante chair from the Davanzati Palace Collection bought in America by Caruso

(3) From the Fifteenth, (4) from the Sixteenth Century. Both in the National Museum at Florence

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CHAIRS

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CABINETS

Made in Florence in the Sixteenth Century for a member of the Strozzi family. Acquired in 1916 by the celebrated tenor, the late Enrico Caruso, for his villa near Florence

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CABINET BOUGHT IN AMERICA

Italian Renaissance walnut table with carved standards of unusual beauty

Italian Renaissance walnut table with stretchers

French Renaissance walnut draw table of simple type in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

In the Ducal Palace at Mantua

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CARVED WOOD CEILING

Tuscan of the Sixteenth Century

Florentine of the Fifteenth Century,
from the Strozzi Palace, Florence

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT DOORS

Sold in New York in 1916 to Caruso for his Florentine residence, the Villa Signa

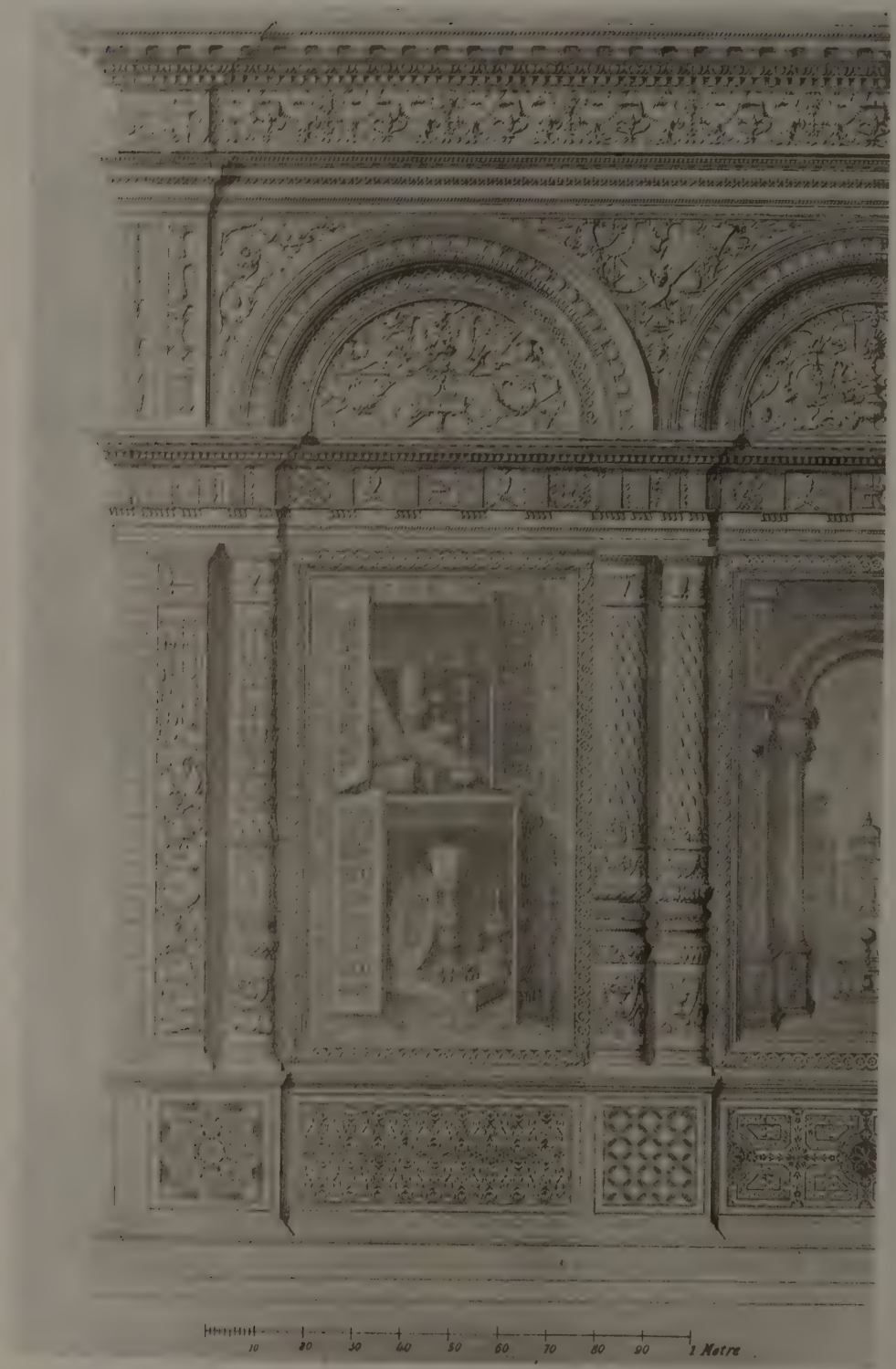
Detail of choir stalls of S. Giovanni Evangelista, Parma

Intarsia pictures and carved woodwork in Santa Maria Maggiore, Bergamo

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CARVED WOOD AND INTARSIA

In the church of Santa Maria in Organo, Verona, Italy

THE FINEST INTARSIA IN THE WORLD



In the church of Santa Maria in Organo, Verona, Italy

THE FINEST INTARSIA IN THE WORLD

Above, general view of the interior; below, section of the inlaid terra cotta floor

THE LAURENTIAN LIBRARY IN FLORENCE, BY MICHELANGELO

Designed by Michelangelo and carved in linden wood by the Florentine craftsmen, Carota and Tasso. One of the world's masterpieces in cabinetwork

THE LAURENTIAN LIBRARY CEILING

The carving on ceiling and desks

Details of pediment over right door

From a Florentine Villa

CHAPTER VI

VENETIAN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CARVED, PAINTED AND GILT CHAIRS

CHAPTER VI

LATER ITALIAN FURNITURE

During the Sixteenth Century, Italy had led the world in matters of style. During the first half of the Seventeenth Century, Italy continued to lead, though less positively. While Italian architects, painters and sculptors, played a prominent part, relatively the Netherlands and France and Spain and England had grown in importance, in the development of the Baroque Renaissance out of the Classic Renaissance.

Between the Classic forms of the Sixteenth Century and the Baroque forms of the Seventeenth Century, there is a marked difference. So that it is better, in speaking of the Renaissance of the Seventeenth Century, to drop the "Renaissance" altogether and to group the styles of the Seventeenth Century under the general heading of Baroque, making clear such variations from the normal as occurred in England. (See Chapter X.)

The Seventeenth Century is emphatically a sculptural century. The furniture is sculptural and largely architectural. The architecture is emphatically sculptural, overloaded with sculptural ornament. Accentuation of parts is common, at the expense of unity of composition. Even painters and tapestry designers were obliged to simulate heavy sculptural relief on a flat surface, and hence to crowd their compositions with shadows leaving little room for interesting small details, such as made delightful the backgrounds of Gothic tapestries and were still conspicuous in the tapestries and the paintings of the Renaissance.

In the birth of Baroque, the influence of Michelangelo had been dominant. In his paintings, as well as in his sculpture, his effort to express Gothic passion in Classic forms produced results that often violate the fundamental principles of good taste. His archi-

tecture, like his sculpture and his painting erred on the side of over-emphasis.

Baroque tendencies were strongly marked in many of the works of art of the Italian Renaissance of the last quarter of the Sixteenth Century. Much of the furniture is heavily carved, and begins to look like French Renaissance furniture. The backs of chairs slant more, and are higher, and two-story furniture begins to be developed, by the superposition of chest on table, or chest on chest.

Nevertheless, so much of the Italian furniture of the first half of the Seventeenth Century was still closely related to the furniture of a century before that it is apt to be labeled Italian Renaissance, in museums and in books.

Considerable Italian furniture of the first half of the Seventeenth Century shows Spanish influence, especially in the use of leather upholstery on chairs.

During the last half of the Seventeenth Century Italy ceased to lead and began to follow. Italian furniture of the Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries so obviously copies French that it is best grouped under the headings, "Louis XIV," "Louis XV," "Louis XVI," "Directoire," "Empire." But this Italian-French furniture by no means follows its models faithfully. The interpretations, like those of England and Spain, are strongly influenced by Italian traditions, and the forms are uniformly heavier and less graceful than those of the French originals.

Towards the latter part of the Eighteenth Century, while Italian furniture continues to copy French, the Classic Revival again brings the influence of Italy to the front. But it is the influence of Ancient Italy, not of Modern Italy. It is inspired by ancient Roman buildings, by ancient Greek buildings, and by Pompeii.

The most distinctive and interesting Italian furniture of the Eighteenth Century is that painted in polychrome on yellow, red or blue grounds. Much of this furniture, during the past ten years, has been imported to America where it has been much copied.

Of this furniture, our illustrations of Venetian painted furniture, some in color, give a good idea. Not always beautiful in shape and not always well made, it charms because of its cheerfulness and picturesqueness.

In much of the Rococo painting on this furniture, I see the influence of Tiepolo, the Boucher of Italy. Assuredly, it was this

influence that warmed the splendid architectural engravings of Piranesi, who began by making architectural drawings as hard and dry and uninteresting as most of those of today.

Piranesi was a genius. He was the greatest architectural engraver who ever lived. Although he could not design fine buildings or furniture himself, his records of Ancient Italian architecture are an invaluable source for modern architects and designers of furniture.

He could put vastly more into a picture than is visible to the eye of the most perfect modern camera. He was also wise in his elimination of the unnecessary details that make photographs stupid.

Piranesi is like an interpreter who opens our eyes to the reading of a strange language. To the ignoramus, the Palaces of the Palatine, and even the Colosseum and the Basilica of Constantine are refuse material out of which to construct modern buildings. Seen through the etched plates of Piranesi, they are alive with the spirit that created them. They are a direct and vivid message to us from the rulers of the greatest architectural empire that ever existed.

Piranesi had tremendous influence upon his contemporaries. The French in their Revival of Classicism towards the end of the reign of Louis XV, studied his work with passionate enthusiasm. After his death his sons transported the huge copperplates to Paris, because there was the best market for the prints. Later a complete edition of the more than a thousand pictures was brought out in Paris by Didot. Now the plates are again in Rome at the Royal Calcografia, and fresh prints are sold at a trifling price.

In England, the influence of Italy and of Piranesi was ever more significant. The great English architect, Robert Adam, was a warm personal friend of Piranesi and prized his work. Moreover, Adam, far more completely than the French, caught the spirit of Ancient Rome in interior decoration and with extraordinary ability transplanted Greek, Roman and Etruscan forms to the walls and furniture of English mansions. The Italian character of his work was accentuated by his constant employment of Italian artists and artisans.

(1)

(2)

(3)

(1) Painted in polychrome and gilt; (2) and (3) carved

ITALIAN FURNITURE OF THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

VENETIAN COMMODE AND CHAIRS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

(1)

(2)

(3)

(1) Lacquered cabinet in green and gold. (2) Painted cabinet in cream and polychrome. (3) Red lacquer chair with its original upholstery of green damask

Painted in polychrome, about 1775

Small mahogany table with marquetry, about 1760

Suggesting Louis XVI, about 1780

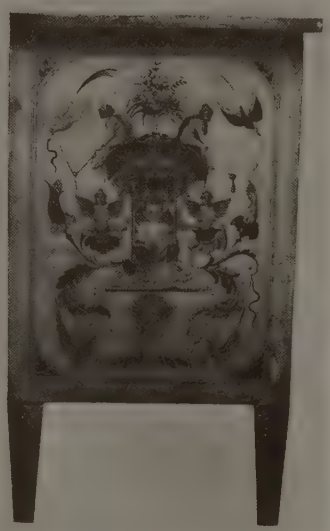
ITALIAN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FURNITURE

From the New York studio and residence of Paul Chalfin

VENETIAN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TABLE AND MIRROR ARRANGED WITH ACCESSORIES OF THE PERIOD

(1)

(2)



(3)

Painted in bright polychrome on cream ground, about 1780. (1) top; (2) front; (3) end

ITALIAN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY COMMODE

In cream and gilt

In polychrome

In red and gilt

ITALIAN LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CHAIRS

Rococo doors in the Chinese style

Red Venetian wardrobe, commode, and mirror, with painted panels and interesting hardware, from the end of the century

CHAPTER VII

Carved, polychrome and gilt. Attributed to Hughes Sambin

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CABINET

CHAPTER VII

FRENCH RENAISSANCE FURNITURE

The carving on French Renaissance furniture is of supreme excellence. Compared with it the carving on Italian Renaissance furniture is fat and flat and crude. Indeed, the carving on French Renaissance furniture is almost too fine. It almost seems to dwarf the utility of the objects it adorns. It looks almost like the work of sculptors trained to produce furniture that, on account of its extraordinary intricacy and perfection of detail, might win the applause of a jury of jewelers.

The perfection of French furniture carving is due to the Gothic tradition. French Romanesque and Gothic sculpture is second to none. The finest pieces rank with the best that was created in Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, and Ancient Rome. Gothic is essentially a carved style, with the chisel used as freely for the rendering of beautiful forms as was the brush in Renaissance Italy and in China.

The great difference between French Renaissance art and architecture and Italian is due to this Gothic tradition. The difference is manifest not only in the carving, but also in the construction. French Renaissance furniture is not only higher, but looks higher than it really is. This is especially marked in the cabinets, many of which are illustrated in this volume.

While Italian Renaissance cabinets are low and seldom have more than one story, French Renaissance cabinets often have two or three stories, and sometimes four, and horizontal lines are constantly broken in sympathy with the upward tendency of Gothic. The pediments that occur at the top of so many French cabinets are constantly broken in this upward effort.

Nevertheless, the motifs of French Renaissance furniture show clearly their Italian and Roman origin. The acanthus leaf is every-

where. Fluted columns and pilasters are frequent. Sphinxes and lion and human heads growing out of lion legs, derived from Ancient Egyptian through Roman and exquisitely carved, show in a refined manner the same tendency towards exaggeration that marks Elizabethan. Walnut is the favorite wood, and for carving of this type is indispensable.

While Italian Renaissance furniture carving shows the influence of Ancient Roman and Romanesque marble reliefs, French Renaissance furniture carving breathes especially the inspiration of Gothic wood sculpture in the round, portraiture and caricature as well as forms purely decorative. The French moldings are sharper and cast sharper shadows, and the French shapes are slenderer, due largely to vertical elongation. The human bodies and faces in French Renaissance paintings and manuscripts and tapestry, as well as in French Renaissance sculpture, are exaggerated vertically. The style is easy to caricature. Indeed, it seems impossible for modern artists and artisans not to caricature it when they try to reproduce it.

Small inset panels of black marble or ebony occur occasionally on French Renaissance cabinets, and some of the chests are elaborately inlaid, though on these also carving is a favorite ornament.

French Renaissance shows to especial advantage in its long and draw tables. The plain top and the horizontal extension give repose lacking in the three-storied cabinets. The bulbous spindles of the standards though strenuously heavy are inoffensive as compared with their Dutch and German cousins. The emphasized, carved ornamentations of the cross stretchers comes where it is veiled by shadows from above.

Much of the furniture from Southern France is almost Italian. Many of the pieces are obviously copied from Italian originals. Some of the draw tables with plain round legs are distinguished from Italian principally by the balls pendant at the corners. In all French Renaissance furniture this tendency to use pendants is a Gothic survival.

Many writers deplore the fact that in the Sixteenth Century France worshipped strange gods; in other words, that France trailed Italy in matters of style. To my mind, it is one of the most fortunate things that could have happened.

Many French Renaissance chairs are marvels of beauty. This is true of those with chest seat and lofty back, based on Gothic originals

but redecorated with Italian ornament, though with Gothic linen-fold panels often retained. It is also true of the lower skeletonized or frame chairs, with plain round posts and small ball feet, in which the proportions are perfect and the execution superb.

The greatness of any nation depends upon the greatness of its accomplishment, and the greatness of its accomplishment is largely dependent upon the greatness of its traditions, inherited or borrowed.

In the Sixteenth Century, Frenchmen were keenly awake to the importance of Ancient Roman and Renaissance Italian. They were determined to recover an inheritance justly theirs, neglected or forgotten during the Dark Ages. They were determined to have a share not only in the revival of Ancient Learning, but also in the revival of Ancient Art. If for a time they seemed to neglect their more immediate inheritance it was because Gothic had run its course.

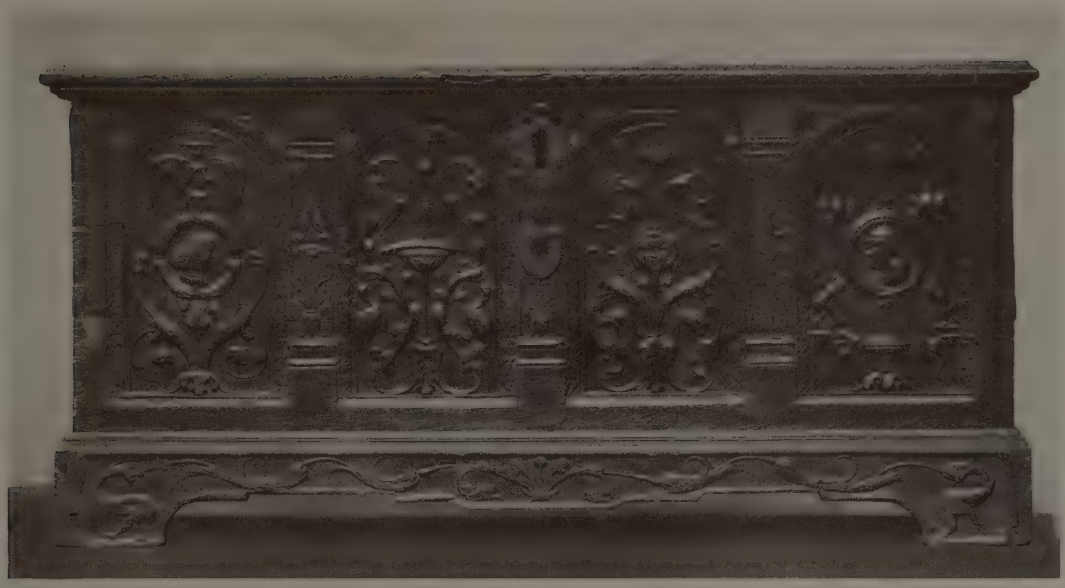
The present is, of all periods, always the period to distrust. Only by constantly returning to the enthusiasms and accomplishments of the past can we grow truly great. The inspiration that has come to the modern world from the newly developed interest in Egyptian Art is supremely important for the future.

When France, in the Sixteenth Century, reasserted its right to a Classic inheritance, it laid the foundations for the leadership in style that has again been hers since the middle of the Seventeenth Century.

Chest from the Mrs. Chauncey Blair Collection

From the stalls of the Abbey of St. Denis

FRENCH RENAISSANCE WOOD CARVING

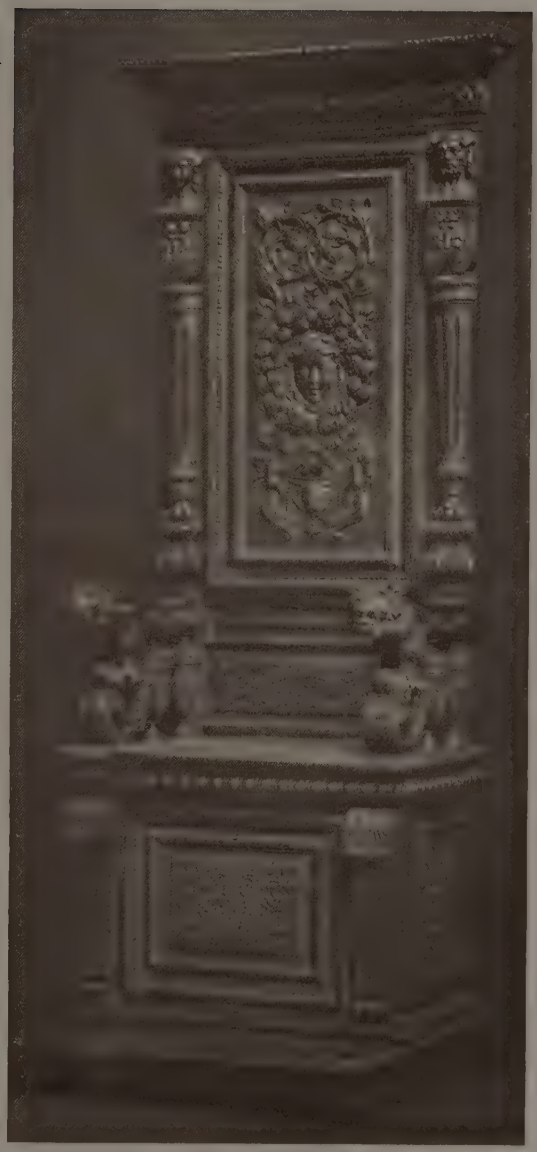


In oak, at the Victoria and Albert Museum

In walnut, at the Victoria and Albert Museum

Notice the Gothic linen-fold panels still lingering in Renaissance construction

FRENCH RENAISSANCE ELABORATELY CARVED CHAIRS



FRENCH RENAISSANCE ELABORATELY CARVED CHAIRS

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CHAIRS AND CABINET

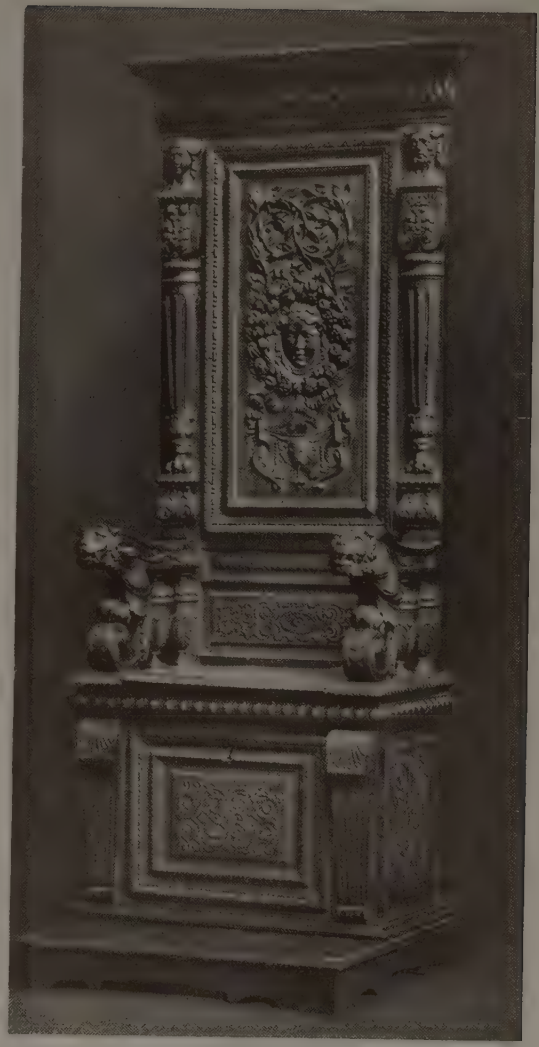
FRENCH RENAISSANCE CHAIRS AND DRESSER

The two on the left from the Chabrières Collection; the one on the right from the Waisse Collection

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT CHAIRS

(1)

(2) From the Chabrières Collection



(3)

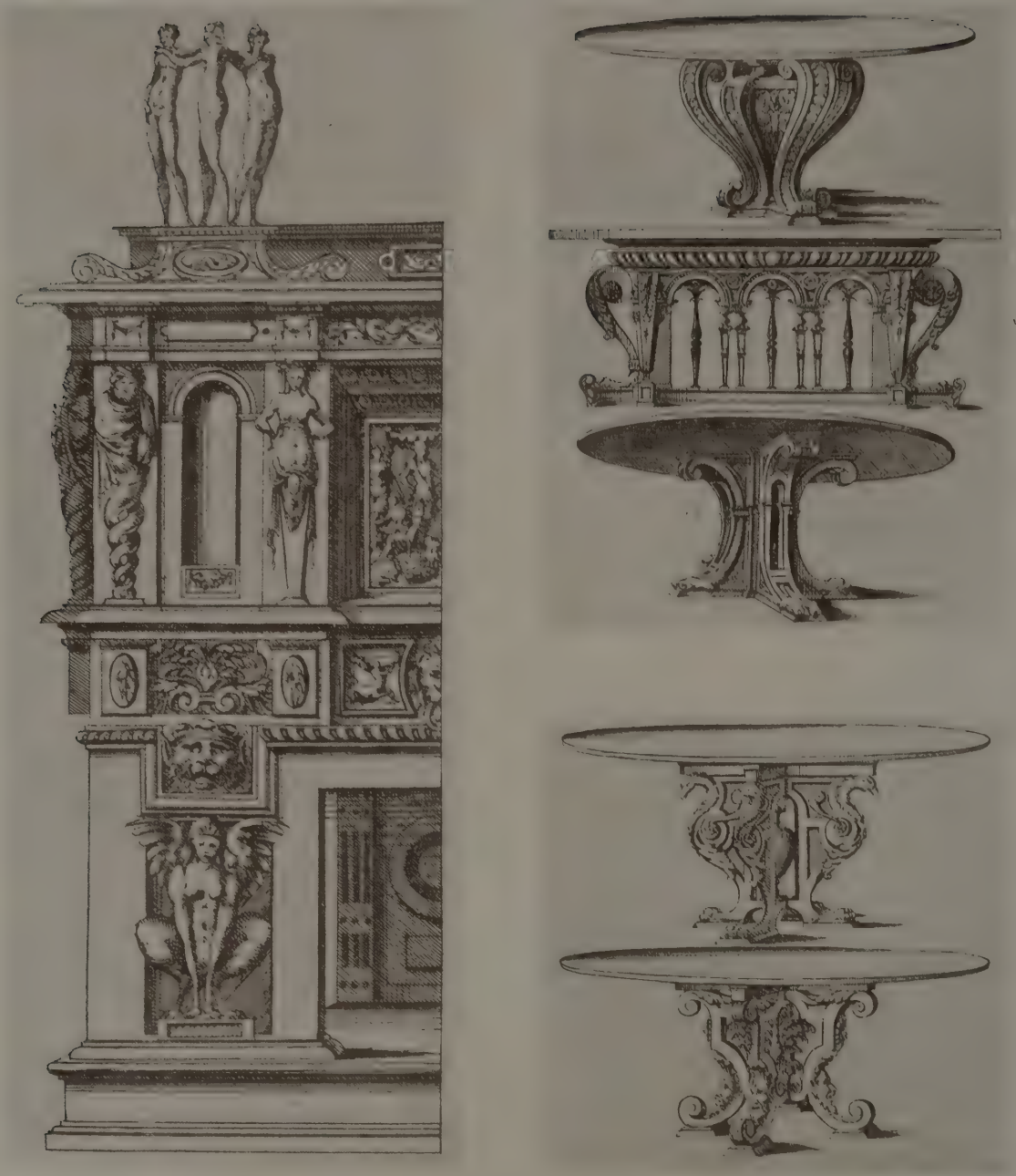
FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT CHAIRS

The middle chair in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The other two from the Rougin Collection

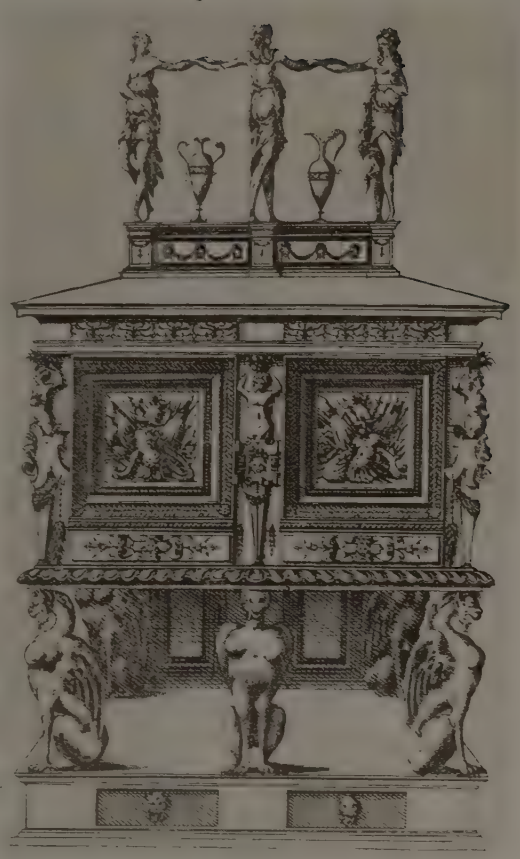
FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT CHAIRS

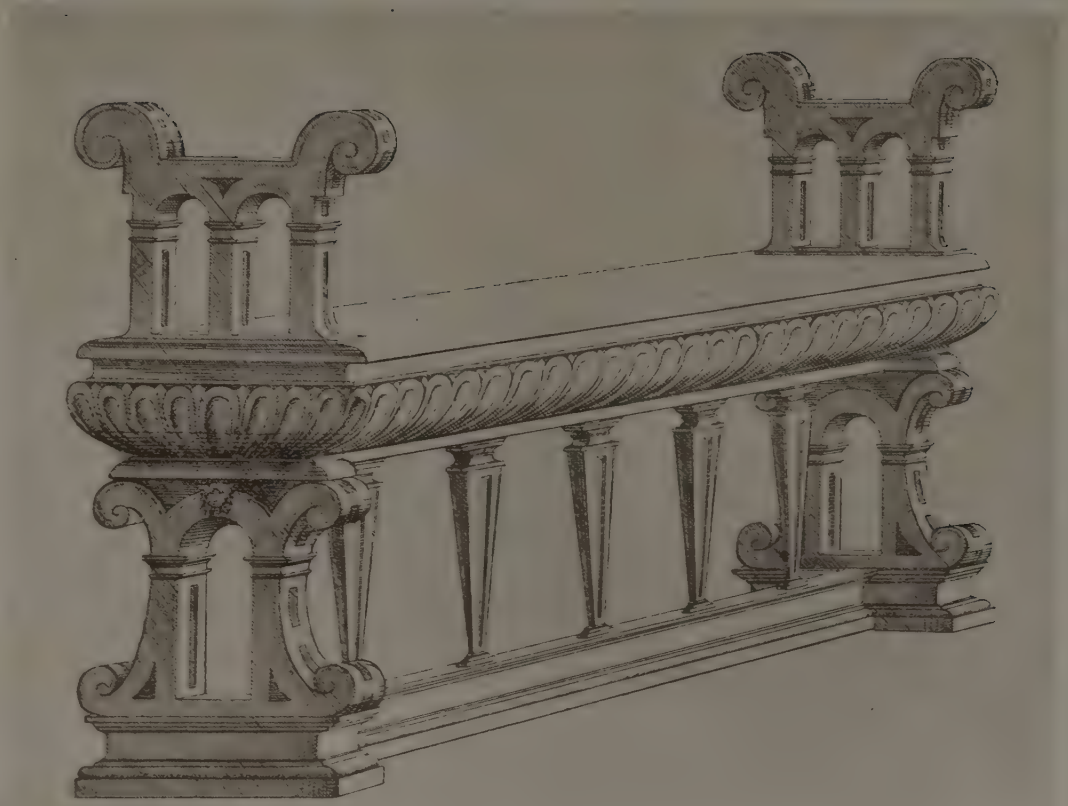
All three in the Victoria and Albert Museum

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT CHAIRS



CABINET AND TABLE DESIGNS BY JACQUES ANDROUET DU CERCEAU





CABINET AND TABLE DESIGNS BY JACQUES ANDROUET DU CERCEAU

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT CABINET

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT CABINETS

On the left, from the Aynard Collection; on the right, from the Chabrières Collection

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT CABINETS

On the left, from the Chabrières Collection; on the right, from the Aynard Collection

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT CABINETS

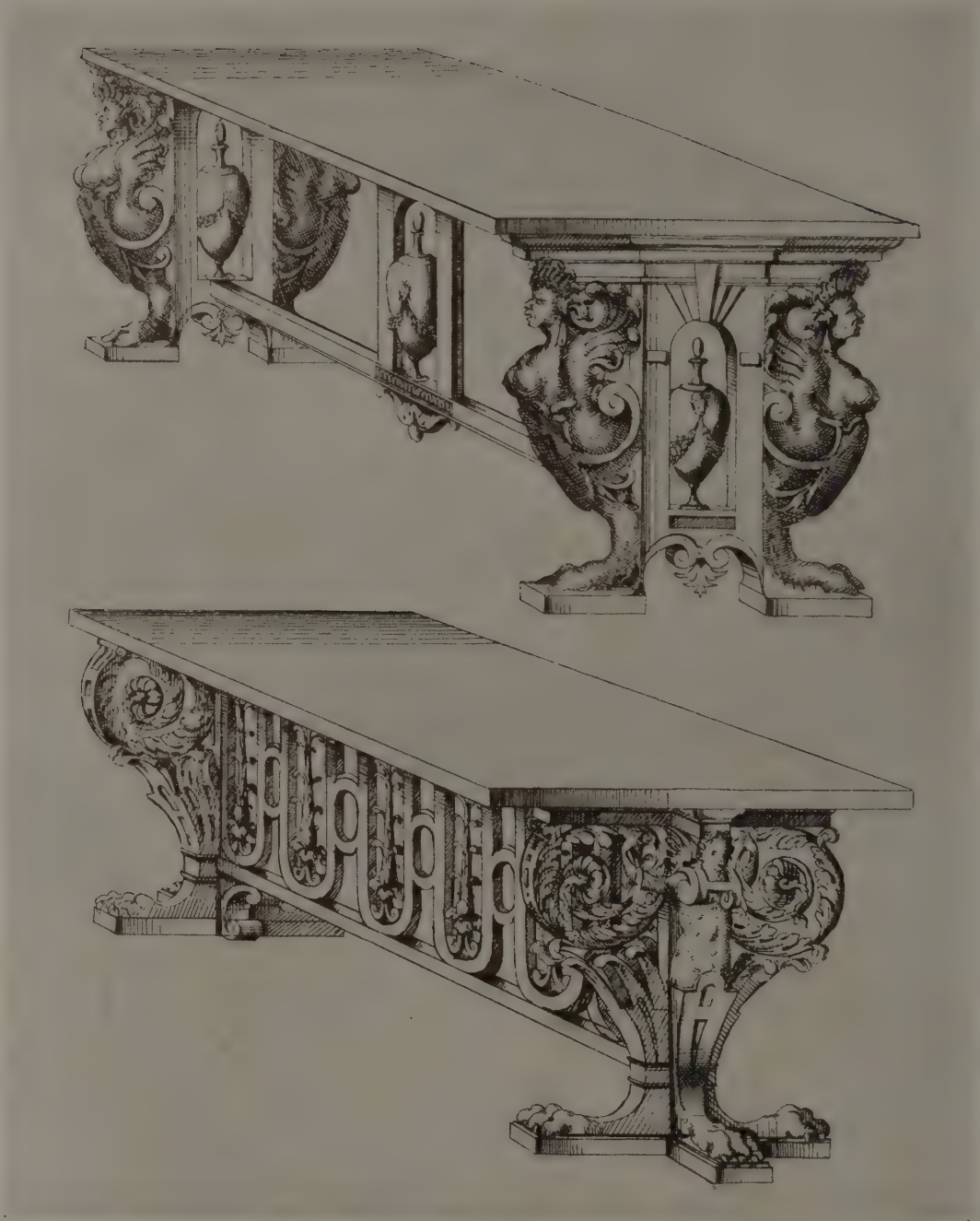
From the Chabrières Collection

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT BUFFET

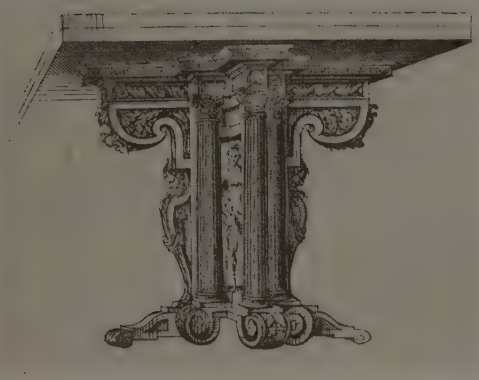
FRENCH RENAISSANCE CABINETS

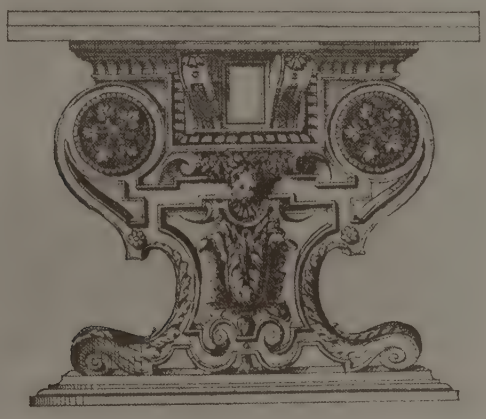
FRENCH RENAISSANCE CREDENCE

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CREDENCE AND CABINET



FRENCH RENAISSANCE TABLE DESIGNS BY JACQUES ANDROUET DU CERCEAU





FRENCH RENAISSANCE TABLE DESIGNS BY JACQUES ANDROUET DU CERCEAU

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT TABLES

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT TABLE

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT TABLES

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT TABLE

Both from the Chabrières Collection

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT TABLES

FRENCH RENAISSANCE CARVED WALNUT DRAW TABLES

FRENCH RENAISSANCE COFFER

CHAPTER VIII

The Louis styles are here harmonized with consummate skill

FRENCH EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FURNITURE IN A NEW YORK RESIDENCE

CHAPTER VIII

LATER FRENCH FURNITURE

Louis XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, Directoire, and Empire

Compared with Louis XV furniture, that of Louis XIV abounds in straight lines. But compared with Renaissance furniture, it abounds in curves. Tired of the straight lines of the Sixteenth Century the makers of the Seventeenth Century introduced broken lines and curves to give variety and sculptural interest. Curved legs on chairs began to take the place of straight legs, and forms were modified in the direction of sculptural massiveness.

The proper name for the style of the Seventeenth Century as a whole is Baroque, an abbreviation of Baroque Renaissance. But while Baroque as a descriptive adjective for pearls means "heavy and irregular in shape," Baroque in architecture, decoration and furniture means not "irregular" but "symmetrical." An illustration of the extent to which symmetry was accentuated at this period are the doors of the Chateau de Marly in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Fundamentally, the Seventeenth Century is a sculptural century. The forms of art express themselves in a sculptural manner. The authority of Michelangelo reigns supreme and painters are compelled to force everything forward from the canvas with heavy shadows. Characteristic Baroque painters are Rubens and Rembrandt.

Especially do architecture and furniture of the Baroque period exaggerate sculpturally. The façades of buildings are crowded with sculptural ornament, forcing details at the expense of the general composition. Windows are enshrined in tabernacles that seem to give each the importance due to an entire building.

Furniture becomes constantly more massive and awkward. Chairs and tables have to be heavily braced with X and other stretchers to keep the legs from wobbling to destruction.

During the period of Louis XIII (1610-1643), the influence of Flanders and Italy was dominant in French art generally, and broken lines and huge S and C curves sought grandeur, usually at the expense of beauty. Indeed, much of the furniture of the period of Louis XIII might even be called awkward.

While the style of Louis XIV (1643-1715) is also a Baroque style, and is also massive and magnificent, it is light and graceful compared with the style of Louis XIII. During the period of Louis XIV France became the dominant state in Europe, artistically as well as politically. During the period of Louis XIV, the French acquired the ascendancy in matters of style and taste which they have ever since maintained, and which they had previously possessed during the Romanesque and Gothic centuries.

While the style of Louis XIV is a Baroque style and a grand style, it is a Baroque style refined and chastened and polished with consummate skill. Under the direction of Charles Lebrun at the Gobelins, furniture and tapestries and other works of art were produced for the Sun King, delightful in proportions and splendid in detail. The extravagances of earlier Italian, French and Flemish Baroque were carefully avoided, and details were brought into scale and harmony with the whole.

Louis XIV furniture is not adapted to small rooms or mediocre environments, but for large rooms and splendid backgrounds it is appropriate and adequate. Life at the court of Louis XIV and in the palace of Versailles was on a large scale. Rooms, instead of being many and minute as in a modern apartment house, were few and huge. Comfort was lacking, but elegance was everywhere. The King and Queen and all their entourage of noble lords and ladies were splendidly appareled, though lacking bath rooms and other conveniences. The King's bed room was rich and royal in furniture and furnishings, but served also as dining room and reception room.

From the modern point of view there was a decided lack of chairs in Louis XIV interiors. The proudest ladies of the Court were obliged to stand through long receptions, and even those allowed seats by royal favor sat on uncomfortable stools and benches. The sumptuous arm chairs associated with the name of Louis XIV were few in number and might almost be called thrones because of the distinction their use conferred.

Compared with the styles of Louis, XV and Louis XVI, the

style of Louis XIV is large and heavy. The chairs and tables of Louis XIV are larger and heavier than the chairs and tables of Louis XV and Louis XVI. The chairs and tables of Louis XIV were made for use in large and magnificent interiors where entertaining was done on a large scale.

Oddly enough, there is a definite relation between the styles of these three Louis's and the lengths of their reigns. Louis XIV was King for seventy-two years. Louis XV was King for fifty-nine years. Louis XVI was King for eighteen years. The style of Louis XIV is a large style. The style of Louis XV is a middle-sized style. The style of Louis XVI is a small style.

What applies to size, applies also to color. The colors of Louis XIV are comparatively heavy and dark. The colors of Louis XV are lighter and more vivacious. The colors of Louis XVI are soft and gentle and gray.

Especially significant is the sequence of shapes during the periods of the three Louis's. The style of Louis XV abounds in curves and is preëminently a curved style as compared with the styles of both Louis XIV and Louis XVI. But the style of Louis XIV is by no means a straight-line style. The style of Louis XIV is a large-curve style, a style of large curves combined with straight lines, many of them broken.

The line relation between the three styles is illustrated clearly by the form that S's and C's assume in the three periods, not only in the alphabet but also and especially in decorative designs.

The S's and C's of Louis XIV are round and symmetrical. The S's and C's of Louis XV are less heavy and are *not* symmetrical. The S's and C's of Louis XVI are elongated and slender, *and* symmetrical.

We have now arrived at the most distinctive single feature of the style of Louis XV, the feature that makes it easy to distinguish Louis XV furniture from furniture of the Louis XIV and Louis XVI periods. The style of Louis XIV is a symmetrical style. The style of Louis XVI is also a symmetrical style. But the style of Louis XV that cuts in between is *unsymmetrical.*

The style of Louis XV is one of the most distinctive decorative styles the world has ever known, perhaps the most distinctive style. Its Rococo shapes are unlike any shapes ever before created. The presence of Rococo shapes in any piece of furniture is proof positive that that piece of furniture is not earlier than the period of Louis XV.

The S's and C's of Louis XV are *unsymmetrical.* They start large and end small. The C's assume almost the shape of the human ear, large above and small below. The S's dwindle from a large curve above into a small curve below.

This lack of symmetry is due to the fact that the style of Louis XV is a Naturalistic style, a Back to Nature style, an Art Nouveau style. It is not an architectural style but a decorative style. It is not a symmetrical style, but a style of irregular curves.

The panel shapes of the three Louis's are distinctive. Those of Louis XIV tend to be squares, those of Louis XVI to be slender rectangles, while those of Louis XV are transitional.

The moldings of the three styles are also distinctive. The moldings of Louis XIV are large and full and round, and apt to be emphasized by ornament that crosses them. The moldings of Louis XV are less heavy, and the ornament begins to run more with the molding than across it. The moldings of Louis XVI are not only slender but tend to look even more slender than they are, because of the parallel lines that run lengthwise on the surface, in the same way that the flutings of a Greek column make it seem longer and higher, while the moldings of the base and the entablature make them seem longer and lower.

The furniture of Louis XIV is not difficult to understand, if one knows how it was used. The best place to learn how it was used is Versailles, fifteen miles from Paris, an easy trip by rail or automobile.

Here one can see the bedchamber of Louis XIV which for many years was the centre of society and government in France. Here the King held his audiences and received the remonstrances of Parliament. Here, on September 1, 1715, he died, and in this bed his body was exposed to view after death.

The elaborate mural decorations were by Lebrun, and the furniture in tortoise-shell and bronze by Boulle. The railing in front of the bed was to guard the King from the close approach of visitors, and behind it no one was admitted except by his express permission.

The Palace of Versailles is not a museum in the ordinary sense of the word. It is not a haphazard collection of objects unsympathetically arranged in an unsuitable building. Versailles is Louis XIV himself, incarnate in the decorative forms that expressed his personality and the personality of his artists and artisans.

Just as the Pharaohs will always be kings of Egypt, though

their bodies were mummified thousands of years ago, so Louis XIV will always be King at Versailles. This is the effigy of his greatness. This is the pyramid that affirms the decorative importance of his age.

Also at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is it possible to see reflected in material form the personality of Louis XIV. The Marly doors, spoken of above, keep him still alive. On them we see carved not only the three fleurs-de-lys of the Bourbons, but also the double L of Louis XIV, together with his sceptre and his staff of justice.

The Louis XIV chairs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art help interpret and restore the personality of Louis XIV. They are part of the Hoentschel Collection of French furniture and decorations, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan in 1906 and presented to the Museum. They have not the grace and vivacity of the Louis XV chairs in the same collection, nor the gentleness and the delicacy of the Louis XVI chairs also in the same collection, but they have the dignity and the masculine strength justly associated with all works of art of the period of Louis XIV.

Let us study the chairs of Louis XIV standing on the first floor of the Morgan Wing. Most of them have cabriole legs (S-shaped), most of them have X stretchers, and all of them have three, some of them four, sides of the seat and back straight. The X stretchers are usually made up of S's, the arms are usually S's, and the S posts supporting the arms are well to the front above the front legs. Most important of all in distinguishing the style of Louis XIV from that of Louis XV, the posts supporting the back are *straight*.

Several of the largest and heaviest of the Louis XIV chairs in the Hoentschel Collection, however, either have no curves, or merely C's introduced into the stretchers. These chairs are more like the chairs of Louis XIII, are more architectural and have more architectural ornament than the later chairs of Louis XIV.

A noticeable feature of the cabriole-legged chairs of Louis XIV is that the legs go out diagonally from the body, that all four legs are alike, and that many of the legs are animal legs, ending in deer feet. Far different are these animal legs from the animal legs of the chairs of ancient Egypt. As pointed out in Chapter I, if an Egyptian lion-legged chair came suddenly to life, it could immediately walk off, because all its four legs face right, with the front legs where front legs ought to be and the hind legs where hind legs ought to be. But if a Louis XIV chair suddenly came to life and tried to walk off, with its

four legs all facing out diagonally, it would depart simultaneously in four different directions.

There is absolutely no excuse for confusing Louis XIV chairs with Louis XV chairs. There is also no excuse for obstinately affirming that a chair is pure Louis XIV or pure Louis XV, when it is transitional between the two. Most of the transitional Louis XIV-XV chairs are usually called Regence, which is nothing more nor less than early Louis XV, the eight years of the minority of Louis XV, during which Philippe d'Orleans was Regent of France.

When Louis XIV died, in 1715, he was out of tune with the times. People were tired of him. He was too old. He had reigned too long. Coming to the throne at the age of five, he had wielded the sceptre for seventy-two years. Just as, if James Buchanan were still President of the United States; imagine how universal would be the cry for change!

In his youth Louis XIV had been a good sport, almost too much of a sport. In his old age he had become solemn and sedate, but, meanwhile, millions of French children had been born whose sympathies were not with senility but with youth.

The son of Louis XIV grew up and hoped to succeed him. But the son died, while the father continued to live on.

The grandson of Louis XIV grew up and hoped to succeed him. But the grandson in turn died, while the grandfather continued to live on.

Finally, in 1715, after these successive disappointments to the youth of France, Louis XIV was succeeded by his great-grandson, Louis XV, then five years old.

No wonder that there was reaction. No wonder that people generally sought liberty and even license, in morals as in art. No wonder that there was a violent movement away from the classic traditions of Louis XIV to the naturalistic innovations of Louis XV.

The Eighteenth Century as a whole is a Chinese style. In the Eighteenth Century, Chinese decorative art dominated Western Europe. Much of the peculiar and extraordinary charm of Eighteenth Century French furniture was borrowed from Chinese paintings, porcelains and silks, and lacquer work.

Already, in the latter part of the Seventeenth Century, the Chinese influence had made itself strongly felt in western Europe. Great quantities of Chinese blue porcelain were brought by sea from

China around the Cape of Good Hope to France, Holland and England, and Dutch Delft pottery and tiles were developed as an avowed imitation of this blue porcelain.

An illustration of the interest felt by Louis XIV in Chinese blue porcelain was the so-called "Trianon de Porcelaine." One of his fair friends was commonly called "La Princesse de Chine." Being asked by the young King to admire the stupendous glories of the Palace of Versailles, which was then building, she responded that in her country perfection was sought rather than size. Whereupon Louis XIV, in the effort to please her, erected a summer palace rich with French and Dutch blue porcelain tiles and vases in the Chinese style. Later, when Madame de Maintenon gained the ascendency over the mind and heart of the King, the Grand Trianon replaced the so-called "Trianon de Porcelaine."

The dominant influence in the Rococo forms of Louis XV is Chinese. Boucher, most characteristic of the Rococo painters, not only haunted the shops of the Parisian dealers in Chinese art and made an important collection of Chinese objects, but also produced decorative drawings and paintings galore, in the Chinese style. He even designed a set of Chinese tapestries for the looms at Beauvais. Pillement was another of the many designers copying and adapting Chinese pictures and decorative forms.

The S's and C's of French decorative art, which had already shown Chinese influence in the period of Louis XIV, acquired all the irregularities of Chinese cloud scrolls in the reign of Louis XV. Indeed, the unsymmetrical and irregular curves of Rococo, whether expressed in wood or metal or *vernis-martin* (the French imitation of Chinese lacquer), are a flattering tribute to the art of Chinese painters and designers.

Nevertheless, all this copying of Chinese art was executed with the utmost skill and in such a manner as to rhyme completely with the European environment. Guérin's work on "French Chinoiserie of the Eighteenth Century" illustrates this.

The style of Louis XV, 1715-1774, is a free style, an unrestrained style, a Naturalistic style. Symmetry is avoided like the pest. Leaves and flowers and nature forms generally are no longer tortured into unnatural regularity. Metal and wood become almost fluid in their power to express the devious sinuosities of Nature.

The legs of Louis XV chairs, like most of those of Louis XIV,

are S curves. But the S's are altogether different in shape. The curve dwindles in size as it approaches the bottom, and the thickness of the chair leg also dwindles. In other words, Louis XV chairs have slender ankles, while Louis XIV chairs have fat ankles! Seats and backs lose all their straight lines and have sides consisting entirely of curves. The front posts carrying the arms recede and slant back, and the S curve of the arms becomes Rococo. Most significant of all and of greatest help in distinguishing the chairs of Louis XV from the chairs of Louis XIV, the posts carrying the back become *curved.*

At this point I should like to say that Rococo as a style is synonymous with Louis XV. It began as a nickname but is now definitely established, though it is apt to be employed to express the extreme effervescences, rather than the refined elegancies, of the Louis XV period.

The style of Louis XVI (1774-1792), is a Back to Classic style. Just as people were weary in 1715 of the dignity of Louis XIV, so in 1760 they were weary of the frivolity of Louis XV. I say 1760 because the style of Louis XVI really begins about fourteen years ahead of its time. Furniture in which straight lines predominate over curves and Classic over Rococo, we are accustomed to call by the name of Louis XVI, even when it was made in the later years of the reign of Louis XV. Moreover, the most interesting Louis XVI furniture is that which is still warm with the curves of Louis XV, and which was made before Louis XVI ascended the throne.

The whole period of Louis XV was a progress toward slenderization. The style of Louis XVI is the most slender and gentle of all styles. Forms are made to look slender not only by elongating them but also by lining them with stripes and flutings. The legs and other vertical members of furniture are enriched with vertical lines to increase their apparent height, while the horizontal members are enriched with horizontal lines to increase their apparent length, the effect of the one balancing the effect of the other, and thus producing the repose we call Classic.

In Louis XVI chairs, as in those of Louis XIV, the sides of the seats and backs are straight. The legs are also straight, usually fluted columns inverted. But in earlier pieces warm with Rococo, the legs are still curved, with curves modified away from the restlessness of Louis XV to the restful flatness of Louis XVI.

Compared with Louis XV furniture, that of Louis XVI is mon-

otonous. Indeed, the weakness of the whole style of Louis XVI is its monotony. For the infinite variety of natural forms of Louis XV, it substitutes tiny repeats and checkerboard regularity.

The sequence of the styles of the three Louis's is easy to study in commodes. The commodes of Louis XIV are heavy, the curves are round and regular, the metal mounts are massive and symmetrical, the marble tops are thick and heavy and in heavy striations of gray and black. The marquetry is dark and heavy, and often of the type made famous by Boulle in tortoise-shell and metal.

In the period of Louis XV it seems as if French commodes had suddenly almost become living objects. The front and sides of the case break into bombé waves that swell like the sea; the sides, instead of coming straight forward, slant in; the marble top changes from dark gray to vivacious reds and yellows. The hardware demonstrates the possibility of accomplishing in metal the almost impossible. The marquetry, forsaking tortoise-shell and metal, produces, in thin slices of exotic woods, floral and chinoiserie surfaces that in grace and charm are unsurpassed by any accomplishment of any art in any period.

Also beautiful are the commodes called Louis XVI, especially those that are still warm with Rococo and still have curved legs and vivacious marquetry. The tendency of Louis XVI marquetry is towards checkerboard effects and vase effects and panels that lack interest though executed with consummate skill. The marble of the tops becomes an inoffensive gray, apt to be weak and meaningless in its markings. The hardware begins to detach itself from the general composition and to spot against the background, while the infinite variety of Louis XV pulls and escutcheons is replaced by the circles and sometimes tiresome simplicities of Louis XVI.

Among the most beautiful chairs of the French Eighteenth Century are those upholstered with Gobelin and Beauvais tapestry seats and backs. While tapestry is extremely durable, it is also able to express with extraordinary vivacity decorative pictures and floral and other motifs. There is none of the flatness of damask or of painted silk, and the richness of colors equals that of illuminated leather, while the surface texture is infinitely superior.

Many of these seats and backs were woven after the designs of Oudry, Artistic Director of the Beauvais Tapestry Works, and later also of the Gobelins. Oudry's rendering of animal forms was tremendously vivid, and his illustrations for La Fontaine's "Fables,"

so many of which were woven into tapestry seats and backs in the Eighteenth Century, still continue to be copied at Aubusson and elsewhere.

The ultimate perfection in chair and sofa upholstery seems to have been reached in a few of the finest examples woven at the Gobelins. The flowers of Tessier in combination with the Rococo pictures of Boucher produced results that have never been equaled in any other material.

DIRECTOIRE AND EMPIRE

The Directoire style is a kind of late Louis XVI or early Empire, and is much affected in France today. It is easy to use because there are no complications. "Simple Classic" is the shibboleth. It might be described as Louis XVI pushed to the nth degree.

Of all French styles, Empire is the least French. In the name of "Classic" it committed so many sins that its deadly influence cast gloom over the whole of the Nineteenth Century. It has all the pomposity of Louis XIV combined with more than the monotony of Louis XVI. It revels in shiny surfaces of rosewood and mahogany, with metal mounts that seem lost in a wilderness of wood.

The style of Louis XVI was kept still full of life by graces inherited from the style of Louis XV, but the Empire style is funereal, made more so by its unintelligent imitation of ancient Greek and Roman forms in an Imperial manner. In the Directoire and Empire periods we have chairs copied from ancient Greek and Roman chairs, with front legs and rear legs concaving out. We also have monumental chairs based on ancient marble chairs, though executed in wood. We also have ancient Egyptian details resulting from Napoleon's briefly victorious visit to Egypt.

In the hands of the connoisseur the use of French furniture in the American home offers effects denied the users of the more conservative Italian and English styles

FRENCH EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FURNITURE IN A NEW YORK RESIDENCE

LOUIS XIV CARVED AND GILT DOORS

From the Rougier Collection

LOUIS XIII EBONY CABINET

From the Chabrières Collection

LOUIS XIII EBONY CABINET

From the Chabrières Collection

LOUIS XIII WALNUT CUPBOARD

LOUIS XIII FURNITURE IN THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

Inlaid with mother-of-pearl and showing the influence of Italy

FRENCH SEVENTEENTH CENTURY WALNUT CABINET

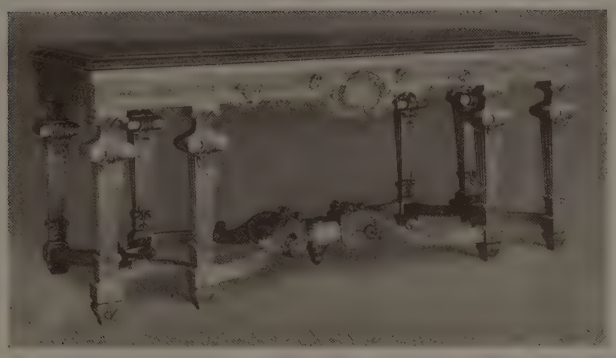
With copper and mother-of-pearl inlay on ebony. In the collection of Baron de Forest

LOUIS XIV ARMOIRE BY BOULLE

In the Louvre

LOUIS XIV GRANDE ARMOIRE BY BOULLE

LOUIS XIV BOULLE FURNITURE



Typical salon table

Commode by Boulle. In the Louvre

Part of the Hoentschel Collection, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan

LOUIS XIV CHAIRS IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Louis XV chair, carved, painted white and gold, and caned

Late Louis XIV chair, carved and caned (originally gilded)

Late Louis XV sofa, upholstered in Aubusson tapestry

Simple table of graceful form

Desk and toilet table combined in marquetry and ormolu

Ancient paneling from a house on the Rue Thorigny, Paris. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan. Furniture from the Hoentschel Collection

Commode with Chinese lacquer panels

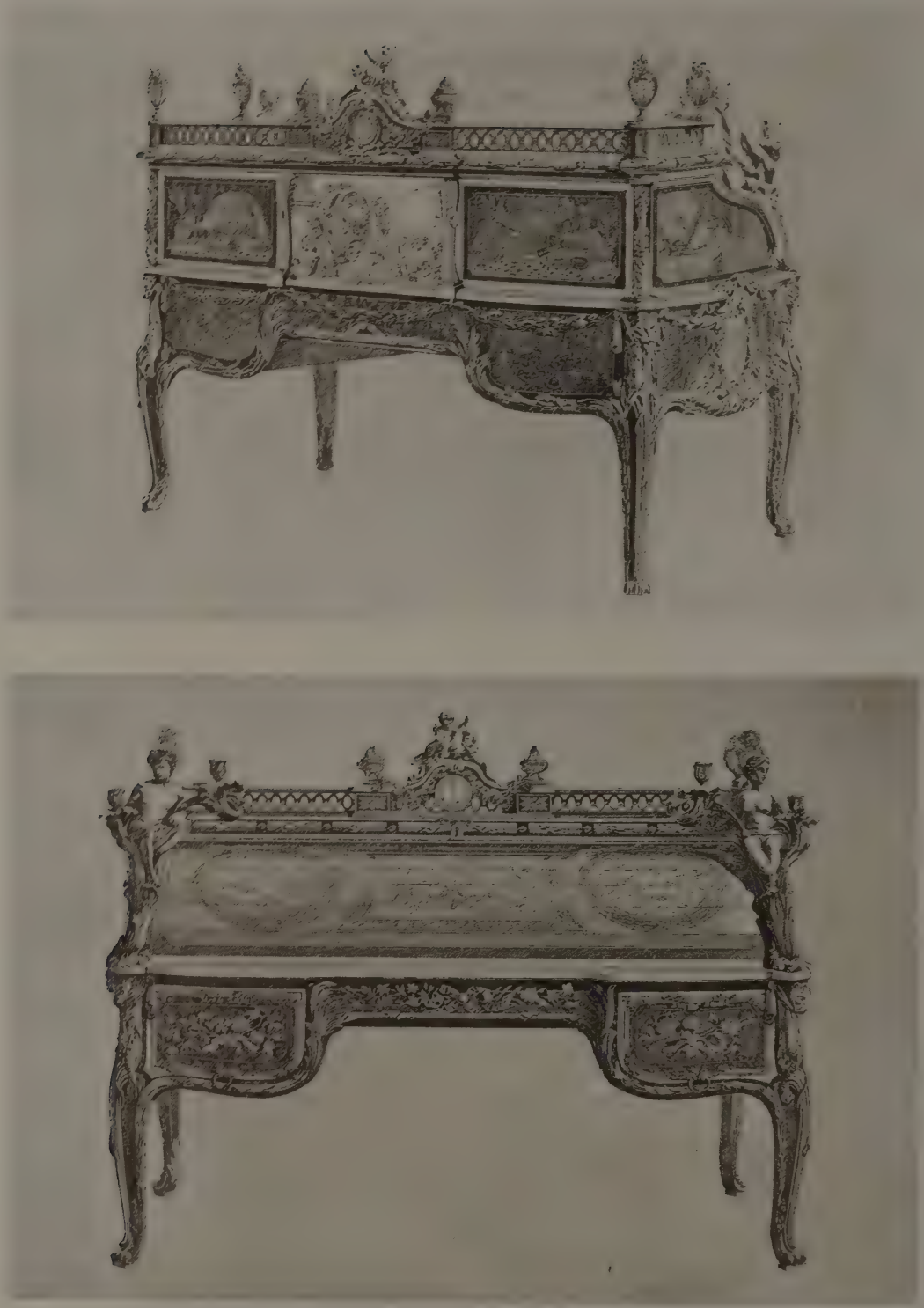
Commode with marquetry, by Joseph

LOUIS XV MARQUETRY CONTRASTED WITH LACQUER

Signed by Marchand. Lent by Laurence Currie for exhibition in the Victoria and Albert Museum

An exceptionally fine piece in the collection of Laurence Currie, lent for exhibition in the Victoria and Albert Museum

FRENCH ROCOCO MARQUETRY DESK AND LACQUERED COMMODE



Designed by Oeben and executed by his pupil and successor, Riesener, who signed it. Dated 1769. It is a transition piece, well on the way towards Louis XVI

LOUIS XV DESK MADE FOR THE KING

Louis XV commode in Chinese lacquer, with characteristic Rococo mounts

Louis XVI commode with marble top, in geometrical marquetry, with characteristic Classic mounts

Louis XV table in the Victoria and Albert Museum

Louis XVI table with marquetry, ormolu, and Sèvres plaques in the Victoria and Albert Museum

Louis XV lady's work table in marquetry and ormolu, by Delorme

Louis XV stool, in the Victoria and Albert Museum

Louis XVI bureau in marquetry and ormolu with panels of Sèvres. In the Victoria and Albert Museum

Marquetry commodes, Louis XV by Caffieri, above; Louis XVI, below

Louis XV cabinet for coins, designed by Schlodtz and dated 1739, in the Bibliothéque Nationale. Rococo at its height

Louis XVI desk made by Riesener for the King of Poland. Just past the line that separates the Classic style of Louis XVI from the Rococo style of Louis XV

Boudoir above with bust of Marie Antoinette; bed room below

LOUIS XVI FURNITURE IN THE PETIT TRIANON

Shop-front formerly at No. 3 Quai Bourbon, Paris. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan

In the boudoir of Marie Antoinette

LOUIS XVI ROOM AT FONTAINEBLEAU

Boudoir of Mme. de Sérilly in the Victoria and Albert Museum. See the mantel in detail on following page

LOUIS XVI INTERIOR

On the left, chair upholstered in Beauvais tapestry, in the Victoria and Albert Museum

Mantelpiece in boudoir of Mme. de Sérilly

In acacia wood with bronze mounts and without marquetry

Mahogany desk said to have been given by Louis XVI to Count Marnesia, who arranged the royal flight to Varennes. From the Lowengard Collection

LOUIS XVI DESKS BY RIESENER

Here is shown open, the desk that on the opposite page is closed. It is a masterpiece of ingenuity

LOUIS XVI CYLINDER DESK, OPEN

A magnificent specimen of French Eighteenth Century cabinetwork, bearing the royal arms of France. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art, presented by Jacques Seligmann of Paris

LOUIS XVI CYLINDER DESK, CLOSED

In acacia wood, with gilt bronze mounts, by Martin Carlin

LOUIS XVI TALL CLOCK IN THE LOUVRE

Metal mounts attributed to Thomire

Metal mounts attributed to Gouthière. Sèvres plaques in end and middle drawers, picture parting of Paris and Helen

LOUIS XVI TABLE AND DESK, BOTH BY JEAN RIESENER

Commode in the dining room

LOUIS XVI FURNITURE IN THE DINING ROOM OF THE PETIT TRIANON

LOUIS XVI COMMODE BY RIESENER

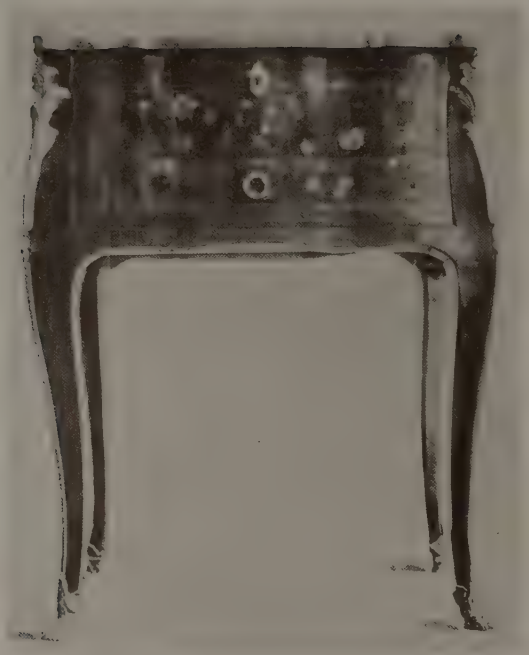
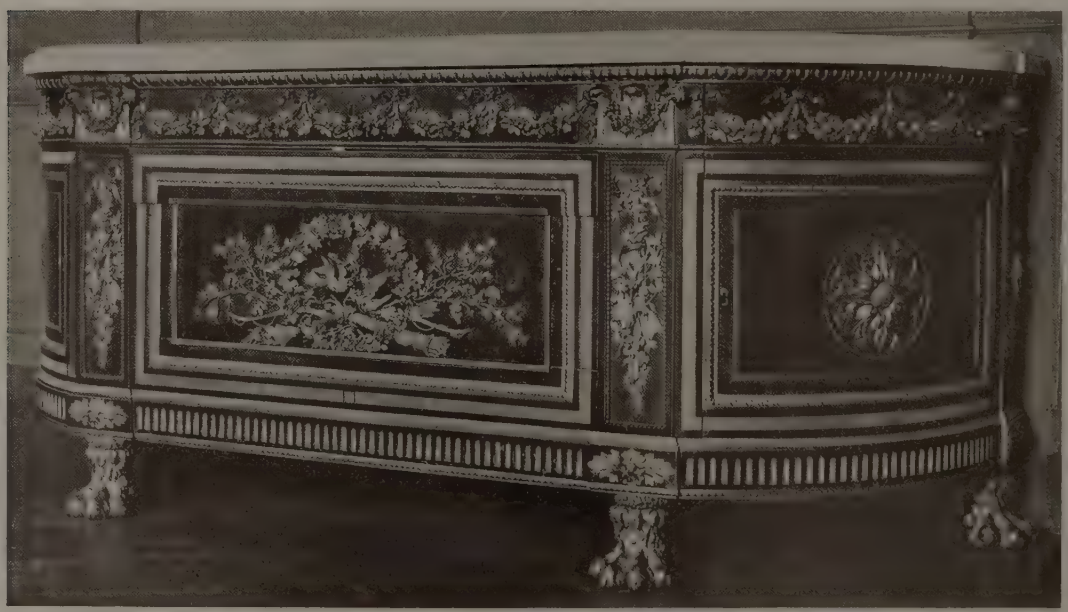


Table with mahogany tulip-wood and sycamore marquetry

Lady's writing desk of tulip-wood, with colored marquetry



Commode with rounded corners by Beneman, about 1786. Exquisite metal-work, but otherwise hard and cold compared with the pieces above

LOUIS XVI FURNITURE OF CONTRASTING TYPES

Illustrating transition from the style of Louis XV to that of Louis XVI

Full Louis XVI by Jacob

LOUIS XVI SOFAS OF CONTRASTING TYPES

In oak and ebony, with lacquer panels. By Weisweiler

In acacia wood, with bronze mounts

LOUIS XVI COMMODES

Made about 1790 for Marie Antoinette whose monogram appears in the metal ornament on the large panel

LOUIS XVI COMMODE ATTRIBUTED TO BENEMAN

Hard and dry Classic, with cameo medallions and bronze frames of monotonous design

LOUIS XVI COMMODE BY CASPAR SCHNEIDER

In marquetry, with bronze mounts still luxurious with the elegance of Louis XVI

In acacia wood, with bronze mounts simplified to the detached small-pattern style of full Louis XVI

LOUIS XVI COMMODES BY RUBESTUCK, ABOVE; AND BY RIESENER, BELOW

In the Louvre

At Fontainebleau

LOUIS XVI COMMODES BY RIESENER

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(1), (2), and (3) Upholstered in Beauvais tapestry; (4) in silk embroidery. All in the Louvre, except (1) that is at Versailles

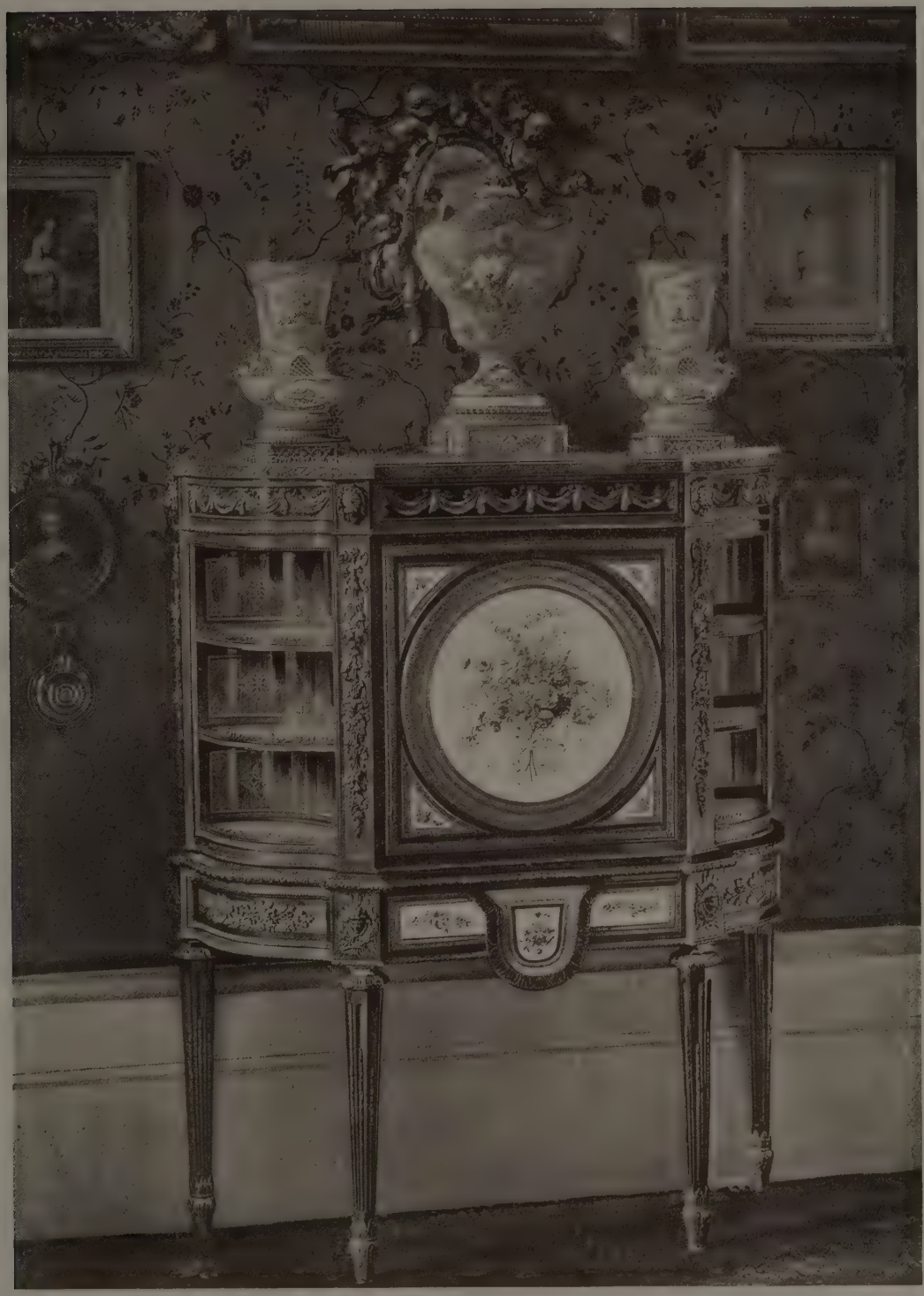
LOUIS XVI CHAIRS BY JACOB

In rosewood, with Sèvres plaques. Designed by Weisweiler, with bronze mounts by Thomire

LOUIS XVI CABINET FROM THE WERTHEIMER COLLECTION

Lacquer panels by Molitor, with bronze mounts by Thomire

LOUIS XVI CABINET IN THE LOUVRE

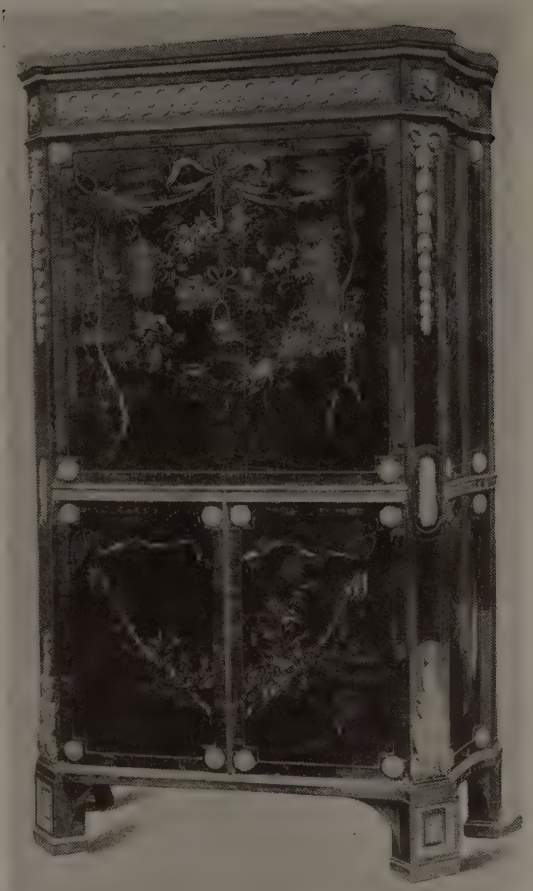


By Martin Carlin, in rosewood, with mounts and Sèvres plaques

LOUIS XVI CABINET IN THE WALLACE COLLECTION

LOUIS XVI WRITING TABLES

Small writing table of Marie Antoinette, by Weisweiler about 1778



Secretary by Roentgen with bronze mounts by Duplessis

Bureau-toilette in transition style, by Saunier. Marquetry panel by Roentgen

LOUIS XVI FURNITURE OF CONTRASTING TYPES

Made for Marie Antoinette about 1787 by Schwerdfeger. In the Petit Trianon

LOUIS XVI JEWEL CABINET

Late Empire chair of mahogany with gilded arms

Empire chair in mahogany and tapestry. In the Cooper Union Museum

Empire bed in the Grand Trianon

Directoire chair in white and gold

Note the style and importance of the metal mounts

FRENCH EMPIRE CHAIR AND SIDEBOARD

EMPIRE TABLE AT MALMAISON BY PERCIER AND FONTAINE

EMPIRE CHAIRS IN THE GRAND TRIANON

Made for the Empress Marie Louise. At Fontainebleau

EMPIRE JEWEL CABINET BY JACOB DESMALTER

The Green Salon, so-called because of the green upholstery

EMPIRE FURNITURE IN THE HOTEL BEAUHARNAIS

All at Malmaison, the screen in the Empress' bed room, the chairs in the council chamber

EMPIRE FURNITURE BY PERCIER AND FONTAINE

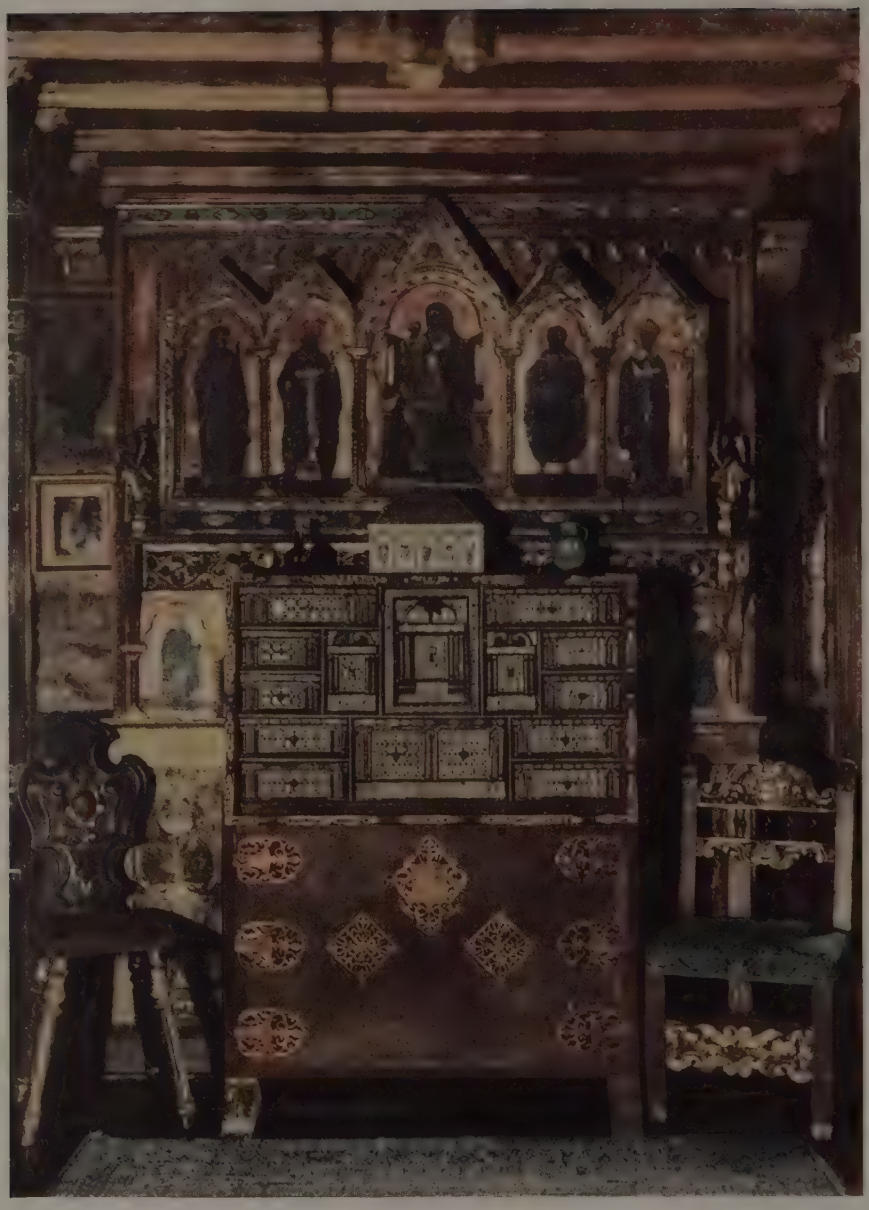
Desk in Cooper Union Museum

Empire commode in mahogany, with marble top and ormolu mounts. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Empire pier glass in mahogany with ormolu mounts. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art

EMPIRE FURNITURE IN NEW YORK MUSEUMS

CHAPTER IX



From the studio apartment of the artists, Bolton and Francis Jones, New York City. The upper part of the Spanish Vargueño is antique; the lower section made recently by Bolton, assisted by his brother. The Italian reredos is antique, its background the work of Francis

SPANISH AND ITALIAN FURNITURE HARMONIZED WITH CONSUMMATE SKILL

CHAPTER IX

SPANISH, PORTUGUESE, FLEMISH, DUTCH AND SWISS FURNITURE

The centre of Spanish art in the United States is the Hispanic Museum, in New York City. The collections not only of Spanish books, but also of Spanish furniture and other works of art, are so rich as to make it a Mecca for those interested in Ancient Spain. I hope it will sometime be possible at the Hispanic Museum to have a comprehensive exhibition of ancient Spanish furniture.

Spanish art and architecture are strikingly different from those of France, England and Italy. The result of centuries of Mohammedan occupation is everywhere evident. We find there not only marvelous Moorish buildings, like the Alhambra, but also strong Moorish influence in rugs, leather, iron, furniture, and the other minor arts. Indeed, the early supremacy of Spain in illuminated leathers, ironwork and pottery was directly due to the Moors.

Leather and iron were more prominently used in Spanish furniture than in that of any other European country. Many of the illuminated leather screens are incomparably rich and brilliant. The iron used to brace the legs of cabinets and tables, for hinges and locks, in the form of pierced metal plaques over velvet, is skilfully worked in elaborate designs of the most fascinating character.

The most distinctive piece of Spanish furniture is the vargueño. Like the two-story cabinets or highboys of other countries, it was a development from the chest. In the Fifteenth Century, when French Gothic influence was still dominant, small chests and cabinets, made and used as separate pieces of furniture, were temporarily placed for convenience on tables or stands. In the Sixteenth Century, these chests and cabinets, with the lid in front and swinging down instead of on top and swinging back, began to be attached to the table or chest on which they stood. Presently, the interior of the chest or

cabinet began to be equipped with drawers, and heavy slides to be inserted in the supporting table or chest to carry the lid when opened down, which then served as a writing table.

The ornamentation of these vargueños is often elaborate and beautiful. Exquisite inlays decorate the fronts of drawers. The outside of the lid and other flat surfaces carry pierced iron plaques, the beauty of which is enhanced by velvet background.

The supporting tables exalt the art of the carver. With two-legged trestles at each end, tied together by elaborate cross stretcher, or braced with wrought iron braces rich in the scrolls and details natural to ironwork, they are both solid and sumptuous.

Many of the chairs of the Spanish Renaissance are copies of Italian chairs, not only the X chairs of the so-called "Dante" type, but also the arm and side chairs with skeletonized straight-line frames. The benches and the tables are much less Italian, and often have the distinctively Spanish iron braces.

Why Italian influence was strong in Spain in the Sixteenth Century, and why Spanish influence was strong in the Netherlands in the same Century, is easily explained. The King of Spain was also Emperor, and the Sixteenth Century was Spain's "Grande Siècle." Charles V, born in Ghent of Flemish-Austrian father and Spanish mother, came nearer to being a World Monarch than any European ruler since the days of Ancient Rome. From his father, Philip the Handsome, he derived control of the Netherlands; from his mother, Joanna, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, Spain and America; from his grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian, the Hapsburg possessions in Austria and elsewhere. His election as Emperor made him the supreme sovereign also of Germany and of Italy.

Spaniards are justly proud of the glorious record made at the end of the Fifteenth Century and beginning of the Sixteenth. In 1492 not only did Columbus under the patronage of Isabella discover America, but the last vestige of Moorish power was eliminated from Spain, the conquest of Granada being effected by the troops of Ferdinand and Isabella, just five centuries after the Cid had become a Spanish national hero by his conquest from the Moors of Toledo and Valencia. What is said to be the Cid's treasure chest on which, though filled with stones and sand, he borrowed money for one of his campaigns, as told in the famous old Spanish poem—hangs high on one of the walls of Burgos Cathedral.

SPANISH, PORTUGUESE, FLEMISH, DUTCH

In 1525 Spain humbled the pride of France at the Battle of Pavia, the Imperial troops of Charles V defeated the French and took prisoner the French King, Francis I, who is then said to have sent the famous message to his mother: "All is lost save honor," whereupon he was escorted ingloriously to captivity in Madrid.

It was during the reign in the Netherlands of Charles V, and of his parents, Philip the Handsome and Joanna the Mad, that the Spanish royal family acquired the splendid Gothic and Early Renaissance tapestries that made the Spanish Royal Collection by far the finest in the world. The Order of the Golden Fleece in Spain, established in the Netherlands early in the Fifteenth Century by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, is another surviving testimonial to the Burgundian ancestry of the Spanish throne.

Just as much furniture commonly classified as Italian Renaissance was made in the first half of the Seventeenth Century, so much furniture commonly classified as Spanish Renaissance dates from the same period, and shows Baroque influence. The backs of chairs begin to slant more towards the rear, and the turning and the carving are more full of movement, with stronger sculptural contrasts.

After the middle of the Seventeenth Century, French influence became again dominant in Spain. Louis XIV, Louis XV and Louis XVI chairs and other furniture were copied, with important variations due to inherited traditions. Like English and Italian Eighteenth Century chairs, those of Spain tend to be ten or fifteen years later in style than those of France, retaining stretchers and high backs longer than they were retained in France. The Rococo forms, especially of cabriole legs, are uniformly heavier and more Baroque.

Much of the Spanish painted and lacquered furniture of the Eighteenth Century resembles Italian painted and lacquered furniture of the same period, and is more apt to be interesting than beautiful.

Portuguese Eighteenth Century furniture is also largely a provincial form of French, with even more peculiarities than those of Spanish furniture and with the Oriental influence stronger.

Interesting for comparison with Spanish furniture is the furniture of Latin Colonial America. We illustrate pieces from Guatemala and Ecuador, in the styles of various periods. Unimportant in itself and seldom beautiful, the workmanship is often excellent, and the inlay and carving by no means despicable. The Mexican portable writing cabinet, in gilt and tooled leather, is exquisite. The Brazilian

brass-inlaid portable desk and shaving case is far superior to most furniture of Empire inspiration.

These Spanish-American forms are also interesting to compare with those that gave birth to American Mission, illustrated near the end of this volume.

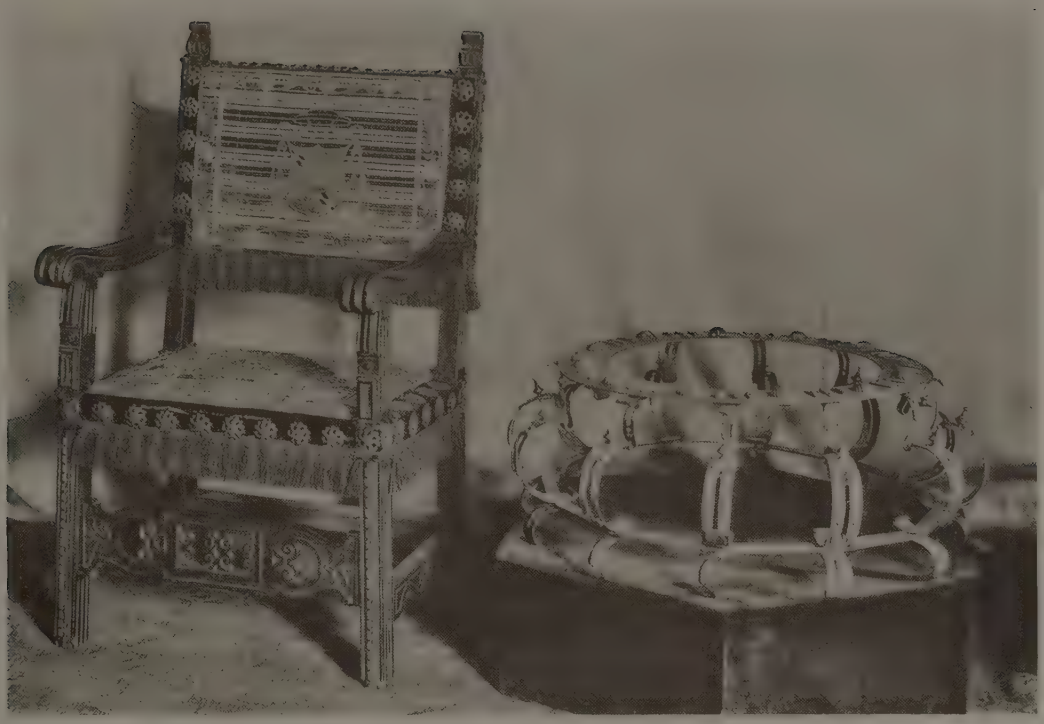
Flemish and Dutch Renaissance furniture shows strong Italian, Spanish, and German influence. It is vastly inferior to Italian Renaissance and French Renaissance furniture, and while apt, like Elizabethan, to indulge in exaggerations, it seems to have less unity of composition and feeling. Many of the cabinets are monumental in size and appallingly architectural. Towards the end of the century huge ball feet were common, such as also disfigure German furniture of the same period. Some of the most extreme examples of Baroque ever perpetrated are due to the Netherlands.

The ugliness of much French Louis XIII furniture is due to Flemish influence. Both Flanders and Holland in the Seventeenth Century were comparatively prosperous, and in the first half of the century the fame of the Flemish painter, Rubens, helped make Flemish-Italian Baroque dominant not only in painting but also in the other arts.

Our illustrations showing furniture in Dutch paintings emphasize the fondness of the Dutch for heavy spindle forms, turned on a lathe. They also give a good idea of how Dutch furniture was installed and used. Other illustrations of Dutch furniture show the rich floral forms in marquetry copied by the English in the reign of William and Mary, and lacquered panels in the Chinese style.

Because of their extensive Oriental commerce, the Dutch, like the Portuguese, felt the Oriental influence earlier than France or England. Delft pottery is one of the evidences of this.

The only Swiss furniture illustrated in this volume is that contained in the Swiss room of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It dates from the Seventeenth Century and resembles Flemish and German furniture of the same period. It is not beautiful.



At left, chair upholstered in red velvet, with embroidered coat-of-arms of a bishop. Beautiful upholstery nails. From the collection of the Marquis de Santillana.
At right, Brazier stand of wrought iron, with bronze ornaments

At left, chair in red velvet upholstery with metal mounts. Elaborate embroidered panel rich with gold, and opulent figures. From collection of Count de las Almenas.
At right, secretary upholstered in red velvet with gilded nail heads. Drawer fronts in wrought silver. From collection of Senor Belda

SPANISH RENAISSANCE FURNITURE FROM PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

(1)

(2)

(3)

Cabinets adorned with pierced metal plaques riveted on velvet. Stand of (1) carved and inlaid. Stand of (2) carved and turned walnut. Stand of (3) carved and gilded. Note shells of St. James on front posts of (1) and (2). (3) From the collection of Don Domingo de las Barcenas

THREE SPANISH RENAISSANCE VARGUEÑOS

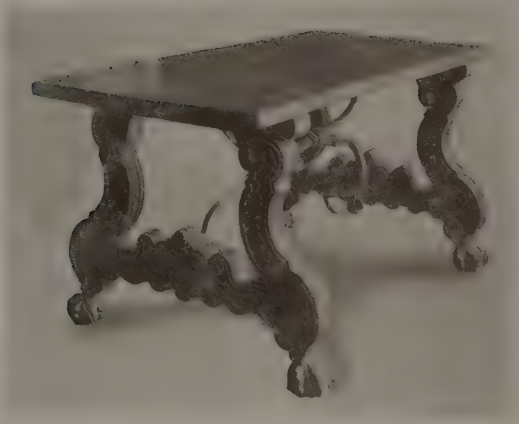
(1)

(2)

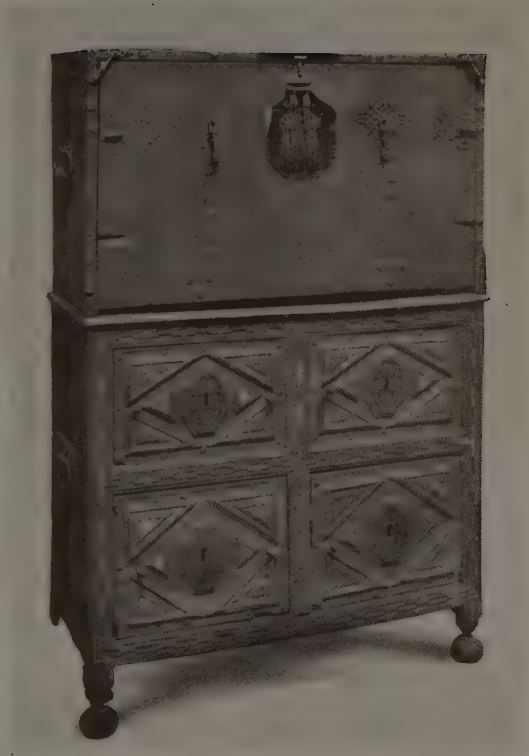
(3)

(1) Cupboard with pine stiles and rails and carved walnut panels. Metal grille work above. (2) Chair of Cardinal Arbues in wrought iron. Now in the Hispanic Museum, New York. One of a set of twelve made for a courthouse in Northern Spain. (3) Carved walnut door, with portrait and armorial panels

SPANISH RENAISSANCE CUPBOARD, CHAIR, AND DOOR



SPANISH RENAISSANCE BENCH AND TABLES



(1)

(2)

(3)

The stands of (1) and (3) are chests of drawers. (3) has the symbolic shells of Saint James, and is now in America. In beauty it has few rivals

THREE SPANISH RENAISSANCE VARGUEÑOS

Elaborately carved in the so-called Plateresque style of the Early Spanish Renaissance, and bearing the arms of the Lacerdas. From the collection of the Duke de Medinaceli

At left, chair upholstered in green velvet, from the collection of Don Bernardo Peyronton. (Middle) Gothic bookstand of wrought iron, shelf of tooled leather, from the collection of Count de Sclafani. At right, scissors chair in the Mudejar style, partly Moorish and partly Renaissance

SPANISH MUDEJAR, GOTHIC AND RENAISSANCE FURNITURE

Splendid example of Spanish trunk in leather and metal

At left, trunk of lignum vitae, studded with ornamental nails. At right, chair upholstered in tooled leather

SPANISH RENAISSANCE TRUNKS, STAND AND CHAIR

Polychrome carved walnut chest, with heavy metal mounts

X-chair in the Italian style

At left, walnut screen, elaborately carved. At right, elaborately carved walnut cabinet, with Seventeenth Century stand

SPANISH RENAISSANCE CHEST, CHAIR, SCREEN AND CABINET

Leather upholstered bench in the Madrid Museum

At left, Seventeenth Century choir stalls in walnut. At right, canopied Gothic throne in carved and inlaid walnut

SPANISH CHOIR STALLS AND BENCH

Renaissance chest, Seventeenth Century table and Eighteenth Century cabinet. The cabinet with bone inlay

SPANISH TABLE, CABINET, AND CHEST

Above, secretary drawers and door elaborately ornamented with ivory and mother-of-pearl. The pulls show the shell of Saint James. Below, secretary in the collection of Don Pedro Montal. The drawer fronts are adorned with inlay and applied carving

Upper left chair in oak with leather seat. The other three chairs in walnut. Upper right chair upholstered in embroidered velvet

FOUR SPANISH SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CHAIRS

Three side chairs upholstered in stamped leather, with gilt-headed nails and metal finials

SPANISH CHAIRS OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

SPANISH CHAIRS OF THE LATE SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

SPANISH CHAIRS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Showing detail of the marquetry of the secretary below

Painted and inlaid secretary with gilt iron mounts

SPANISH SECRETARY OF THE LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

(1)

(2)

(3)

(1) Chair upholstered in illuminated leather. Seventeenth Century ebony display cabinet, with ornament in tortoise-shell and bronze. (2) Gothic chest paneled in metalwork over red velvet. The iron braces of the stand are of unusual beauty. (3) Exquisite metalwork in geometrical arabesques

SPANISH FURNITURE OF CONTRASTING TYPES

Inlaid walnut desk with turned legs

Mirror in vermilion lacquer and gilt. Table painted black with polychrome ornament

Walnut buffet elaborate with marquetry

SPANISH DESKS, TABLE AND MIRROR OF LATE SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Lent by the Duke of Westminster to the Victoria and Albert Museum

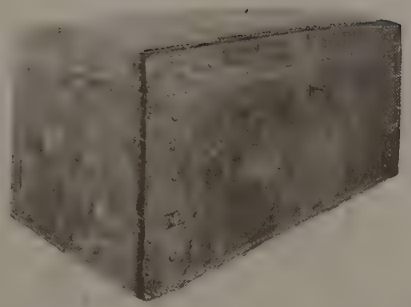
SPANISH ILLUMINATED LEATHER SCREEN OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Eighteenth Century bookcase from Granada, lacquered after the Chinese fashion. The chairs are modern, made in New York to stand as shown in the illustration

SPANISH CHINOISERIE

Six-legged mahogany bed, with fluted posts, headboard painted in polychrome and carved. Late Eighteenth Century contemporary with Louis XVI and with Robert Adam

SPANISH EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BED



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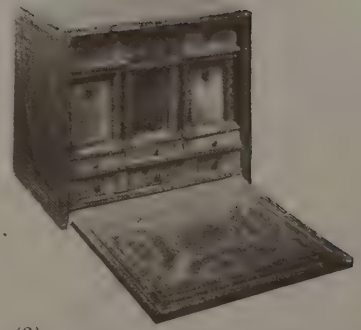

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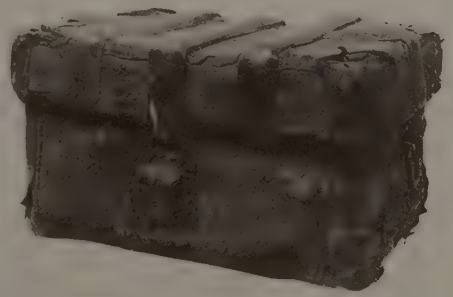

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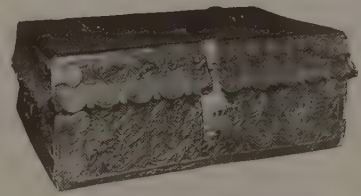

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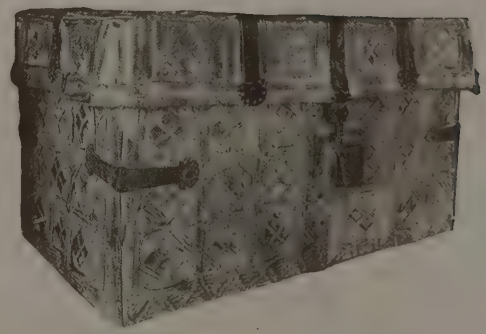


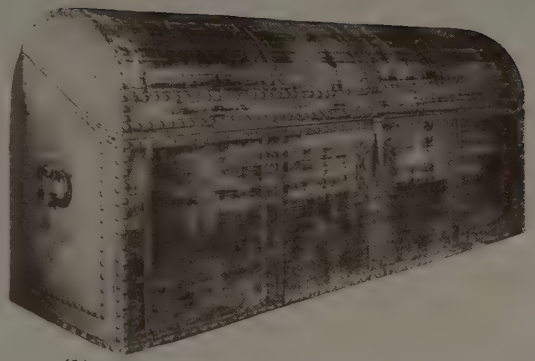
(6)

(7)

(8)

(9)

(1) Trunk four feet long, upholstered in brown leather studded with brass nails and bosses, made by John Selby of London about 1740. (2) Spanish arcon of the Early Seventeenth Century, covered with gilt-tooled brown leather. (3) Portable Mexican Seventeenth Century writing cabinet. (7) Tooled leather top of the table shown in (8)



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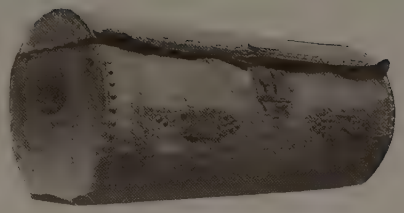

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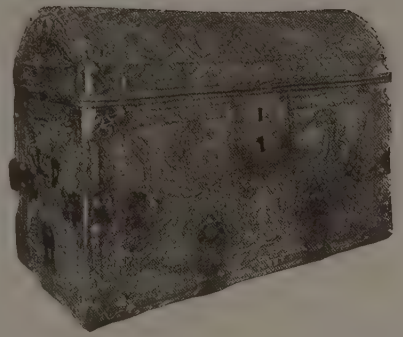

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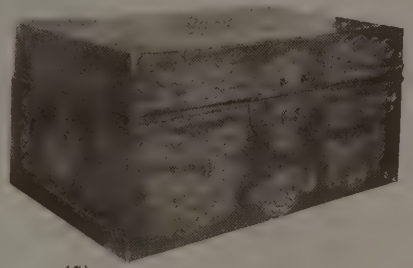

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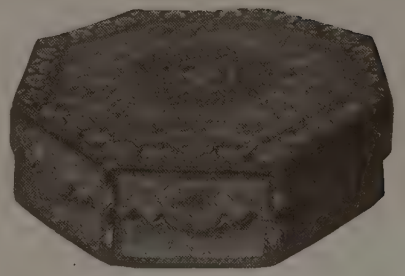


(8)

(1) Seventeenth Century Spanish arcon covered with green velvet. (3) Paneled in red velvet with elaborately beautiful metal mounts. (4) Spanish arcon covered with embroidered straw matting. (5) Chippendale cabinet covered with leather Chinoiserie. (6) William and Mary secretary, upper part paneled in mulberry brocade. (8) Persian box covered with elaborate embroidery

Side chair matching settee below

Rococo chair with claw and ball feet

Walnut settee with triple chair back, about 1735

PORTUGUESE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CHAIRS

Seventeenth Century with side stretchers and stamped leather upholstery

Seventeenth Century with spiral turning

Eighteenth Century with Rococo cresting and pierced splat

PORTUGUESE CHAIRS OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Rococo mahogany chair

Carved walnut bed with spiral posts

Rococo mahogany chair

All three pieces date from the first half of the Eighteenth Century

PORTUGUESE ROCOCO FURNITURE

Seventeenth Century chairs from Guatemala. The two on the left, upholstered in leather; the one on the right, caned

Late Seventeenth Century Ecuadorian inlaid cabinet

Late Eighteenth Century Guatemalan mahogany settee

Inlaid top of table below

Early Nineteenth Century Guatemalan chair in Empire style

Eighteenth Century pedestal table from Guatemala

Eighteenth Century roundabout chair in cedar and cane from Guatemala

Eighteenth Century Mexican chair, painted and gilt

SPANISH AMERICAN EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY FURNITURE

Showing carved detail in applied high relief, of the chest below

Guatemalan chest on stand, of the Eighteenth Century

Eighteenth Century Guatemalan console table, showing Mayan influence in the design of the carving

Late Seventeenth Century Mexican tooled and gilt leather portable writing cabinet

Showing the cabinet below, closed

Early Nineteenth Century Brazilian portable desk and shaving case

Small Guatemalan cabinet of the Late Seventeenth Century

Flemish walnut chair of the Late Seventeenth Century, round and caned

Flemish walnut chair of the Seventeenth Century

Flemish Seventeenth Century folding chair in walnut

FLEMISH CHAIRS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Flemish Seventeenth Century carved oak

Richly carved cabinet, with ebony inlay

FLEMISH CABINET AND PANEL OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Flemish Baroque cabinet rampart with architecture

Dutch Baroque bed of the Early Seventeenth Century

Eighteenth Century walnut desk, carved and inlaid

Seventeenth Century chest upholstered in embroidery

Mahogany wardrobe of the Late Eighteenth Century

Seventeenth Century wardrobe with elaborated colored marquetry

WARDROBES OF THE NETHERLANDS

Baroque oak cabinet with huge ball feet and ebony appliqués

Baroque inlaid walnut cabinet, with broken pediment, and rampart carved panels

Massive cabinet, with bulbous feet, pendants, and anti-pendants, and extravagantly Baroque carved panels

"Music Lesson" by Vermeer

"Woman Reading" by Pieter de Hooch

"Music Lesson" by Terborch

"Girl Sleeping" by Vermeer

All the paintings date from the middle of the Eighteenth Century, and the furniture is of the period. Oriental rugs, chimneypiece, chest, chairs, spinet, picture frames, all harmonize. We New Englanders and New Yorkers owe much to the chair in which De Hooch has his "Woman Reading"

FURNITURE OF THE NETHERLANDS IN PAINTINGS IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

"Interior with Young Couple," in the Altman Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Here we see not only spindle chairs, with embroidered upholstery, and a small mirror, but also and especially an elaborately overdraped bed of the period, with draw curtains and pillows as clearly revealed as this style of painting permits

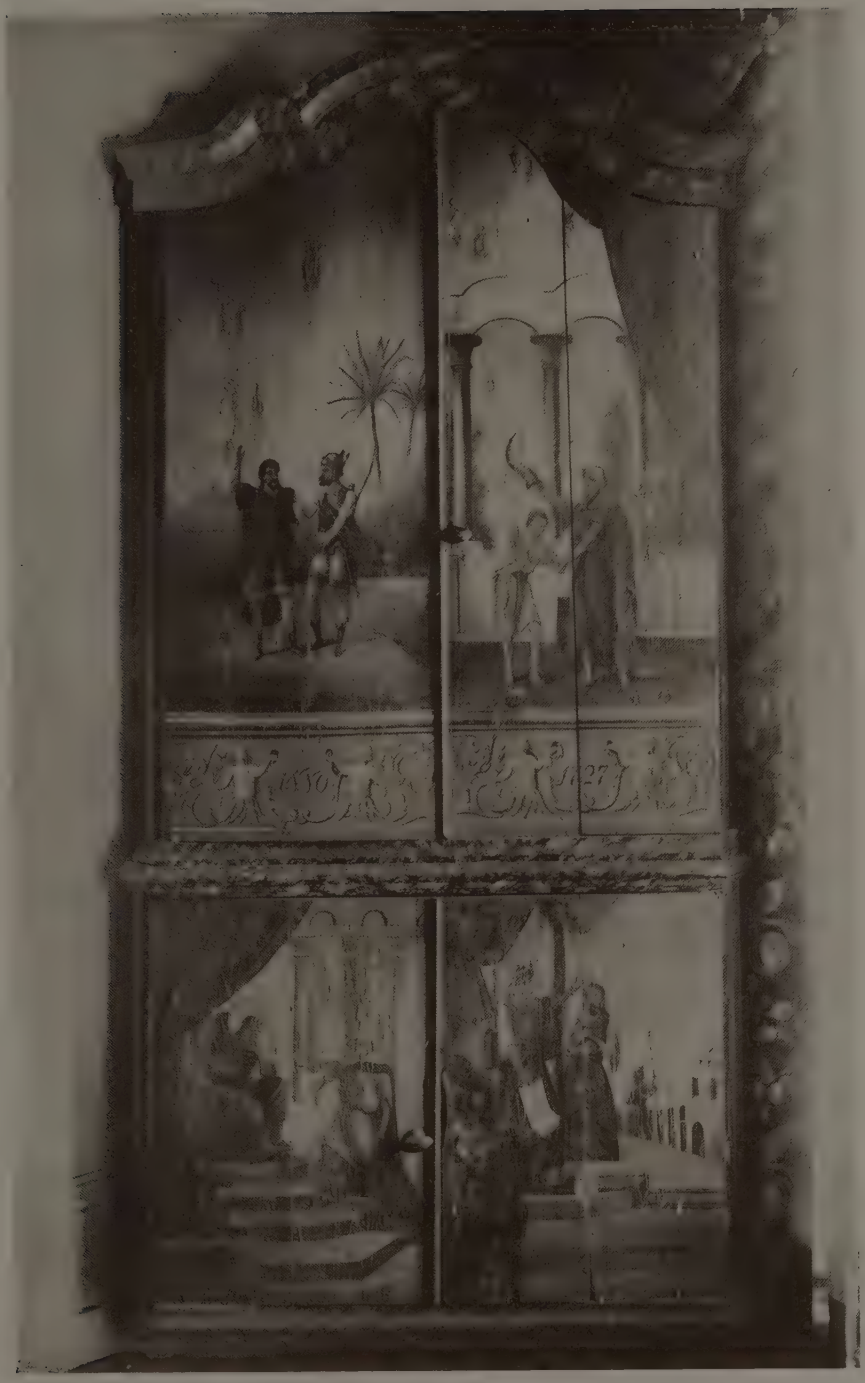
FURNITURE OF THE NETHERLANDS AS PAINTED BY PIETER DE HOOCH

Rococo interior with monumental chimneypiece, characteristic chairs, table, clock, chandelier and sconces

FURNITURE OF THE NETHERLANDS AS PAINTED BY CORNELIUS TROOST

Oak table with marquetry florals, Early Eighteenth Century

Rococo table, middle of the Eighteenth Century



NETHERLANDISH EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PAINTED CORNER CABINET

Gothic-Renaissance transition carved oak panel

Late Rococo wardrobe with interesting hardware

Empire secretary, fire-gilt mounts, Early Nineteenth Centur

In the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Swiss Furniture of the Seventeenth Century

CHAPTER X

Installed at Sizergh Castle, Westmoreland, about 1580 by Dame Alice Strickland-Boynton. Now in the Victoria and Albert Museum

ENGLISH ELIZABETHAN INLAID WOODWORK

CHAPTER X

ENGLISH TUDOR AND STUART FURNITURE

Elizabethan, Jacobean, Charles II, William and Mary, Queen Anne

While English furniture is inferior to that of the Italian Renaissance and of France, in purity of design and perfection of rhythm, its catholicity of motif and excellence of workmanship give it a large interest and a wide appeal especially to us Americans who have directly inherited so much of our furniture from England.

English furniture of all periods trails that of continental Europe; in the Sixteenth Century and first half of the Seventeenth, that of the Italian Renaissance; since then, that of France. But the copyings and adaptations have always been sufficiently dominated by English traditions to create distinctive English types.

Just as French Renaissance furniture, because of the French-Gothic tradition and spirit, differs from Italian Renaissance furniture, so the furniture of the English Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century differs from both French and Italian because of its inheritance of English Gothic. Indeed, during the first half of the Sixteenth Century, furniture in England remained almost entirely Gothic, and the few works of art executed in the Italian style were executed by Italian artists and artisans. But during the Elizabethan period (1558-1603) English architects and English artisans began to work in the Italian style, and hundreds of splendid country houses were built and furnished in the Italian manner, as then understood by Englishmen.

Elizabethan furniture is definitely Renaissance furniture, but Renaissance furniture differing widely from the Italian originals. In Italy it was easy to develop interesting forms on the basis of the concrete examples there everywhere found. But in England it was necessary to work largely from sketches and drawings and prints

and from Flemish and German, and Italian and French books.

Paper architecture and paper furniture, meaning furniture inspired by pictures rather than by originals, is apt to exaggerate. The finest part of furniture and architecture is the part that the pencil and the camera cannot fix. Furthermore, the Gothic tradition, with its wealth of splendid carving, made the Italian forms seem tame to Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century. Consequently, Elizabethan furniture, as compared with Italian Renaissance furniture, is full of exaggerations.

Take, for instance, the huge bulbs that dominate the legs and posts of Elizabethan cupboards and tables, and beds. We find similar extravagances in Dutch and German furniture, and to a less extent, in some French Renaissance furniture. But it is only when we study the Flemish and German books illustrating Italian Renaissance furniture that we are able to understand how such extravagant interpretations were possible.

The Elizabethan style is not a simple style. It is a style for show, rather than for comfort. Elizabethan mansions were planned for the purpose of displaying to the world the wealth and culture of the landed proprietors of England. Nevertheless, of all the English styles it is, in many respects, the most interesting. Like Elizabethan literature, it is so full of affectations as to seem natural, because frankly admitting them. Like Shakespeare, it borrows materials from every available source, transforming them into vivid and spirited works of art.

Important to note is the fact that Elizabethan mansions were not fortified castles, but peaceful residences. The settled conditions of life during the reign of Henry VIII had rendered fortification no longer necessary, and the suppression of the monasteries had turned all the building resources of the kingdom into the creation of homes for noble families. So that on domestic architecture was now spent the money that previously had gone to build churches and convents.

The furniture of Elizabethan mansions was comparatively scanty. One or two huge four-poster beds having bulbous posts overlaid with carved strap-work; several large rectangular tables with bulbous strap-work legs tied together by stretchers; one or two cupboards of the type familiar to us all; numerous small tables; high, flat screens with leaves painted or tapestry-covered; and chests galore, of which many were richly carved; stools and benches.

Besides carving, inlay was frequently called upon to help make furniture beautiful; not thin inlay of the veneer type, but pieces of olive and other light colored woods, set into channels excavated in the solid oak.

Perhaps I should here explain the difference between intarsia, inlay and marquetry. I will begin by saying that the difference is principally geographical; inlay being in England what in Italy is intarsia, and in France is marquetry. But I will end by explaining that marquetry refers primarily to the thin figured veneers made famous in France in the Eighteenth Century; intarsia, to the Italian inlays of the Renaissance, and before; and inlay, to marquetry of the Elizabethan type.

English furniture styles are apt to be confusing. They are less logical than French furniture styles. This is due not only to the confusion of motifs so common in English furniture, but also to the difference between the English and the French mind.

If you go into a French furniture shop and the French proprietor shows you an important piece of ancient French furniture, his chief anxiety is to show you that the example offered is in every respect true to recognized style and tradition. But if you go into an English furniture shop, the Englishman is almost sure not only to show you examples that are different, but to claim that the differences are marks of distinction, and to argue with you that the generally received ideas are wrong.

Perhaps it is this individualistic point of view which makes so many newly rich Americans boast of having had a work of art specially designed for them, and the models destroyed after making, so that no duplicate could ever be created.

Be that as it may, English furniture is so illogical that its greatest historian, Percy MacQuoid, in his monumental book classifies it, not by the reigns of kings, but by the woods of which it is made. The classification is a just and proper one, and should always be kept in mind when using the lesser terms Jacobean, Charles II, Georgian, Adam and others.

Mr. MacQuoid groups the furniture of England in Four Ages:

I. The Age of Oak. II. The Age of Walnut. III. The Age of Mahogany. IV. The Age of Satinwood.

All English Gothic, Elizabethan, and Jacobean furniture down to 1660, belongs to the Age of Oak.

All later Jacobean (Charles II, and James II), William and Mary, and Queen Anne furniture—in other words, the furniture contemporary with French Louis XIV—belongs to the Age of Walnut.

Georgian furniture (1714-1760) belongs to the Age of Mahogany.

Adam furniture (1760-1792) belongs to the Age of Satinwood.

This does not mean that the line was hard and fast between the different Ages. Indeed, much furniture was still made of oak in the Walnut period; and considerable furniture was made of walnut in the early part of the Georgian period. But it does mean that each of the Four Ages had its distinctive woods.

Jacobean is a term commonly applied to English furniture made during the reigns of James I (1603-1625), Charles I (1625-1649), the Commonwealth (1649-1660), and Charles II (1660-1685), and James II (1685-1688). Inasmuch as a great break in style comes with the Restoration of Charles II, in 1660, when walnut began to take the place of oak, and extravagant Baroque S's and C's the place of Renaissance straight lines, I prefer to confine the term Jacobean to the years 1603-1660, and to speak of the furniture after that period as Charles II, using the term Late Jacobean for the oak cupboards and chests developed from Earlier Jacobean by the application of half spindles and other relief ornament in ebony or oak.

The relation between Elizabethan furniture and Jacobean furniture is entirely unlike the relation between Continental Renaissance furniture of the Sixteenth Century and Continental Renaissance furniture of the first half of the Seventeenth Century. On the Continent, at the beginning of the Seventeenth Century, Baroque broken lines and curves began to take the place of Renaissance straight lines. In other words, forms began to be less Classic and to have more movement. In England, precisely the opposite took place. Jacobean is far more Classic than Elizabethan. Ornament, instead of becoming more extravagant, became less extravagant. Jacobean as compared with Elizabethan is a flat style, a tame style, often, like the style of Louis XVI, uninteresting because of its many repeats and lack of originality.

The bulbous legs of tables and cupboards and beds became less bulbous. The carved ornament became less obtrusive and at the same time less vivid and frequently monotonous. On wood panels,

a tree under a round arch is reiterated pitilessly. Fortunately, the general pruning of forms is made up for by increased richness in the upholstery. Certainly the splendid X chairs of Italian inspiration at Knole, with their rich velvets and fringes, are furniture to be proud of. The embroideries of the Jacobean period employed to upholster not only chairs and sofas, but also as draperies for four-posters, worthily sustain the medieval reputation of England for needlework.

In 1660, the Age of Oak (the straight line period of English furniture) came to an end. It was succeeded by the Age of Walnut, which lends itself to the Baroque curves that in oak are apt to split.

During all of the walnut period, English furniture trailed French. The Court of Charles II (1660-1685) was hardly more than a dependency of the Court of Louis XIV. Splendid tapestries and furniture from the Gobelins adorned the apartments of the fair French lady whom Louis XIV employed to keep Charles II interested and make sure that he earned the salary paid him by Louis XIV for his subservience. Another fair friend of Charles II was the Duchess of Mazarin, a niece of the famous Cardinal Mazarin.

However, most of the furniture that we call Charles II is French-Flemish rather than French, that is to say, is more like the furniture of Louis XIII, and of Flanders where Charles was long an exile. The backs of Charles II chairs are higher than earlier backs and have a comfortable slant. Chairs are also frequently upholstered in cane, which at this time began also to be much used in France.

There is no James II style. He did not reign long enough. It takes time to develop a style.

Inasmuch as King William was a Dutchman, it is not strange that William and Mary furniture is strongly Dutch. Chairs grew even taller than they were under Charles II, and the forms and shapes of furniture more Baroque and more unwieldy, with the legs necessarily tied together by stretchers. Marquetry on case furniture became usual, at first in designs of Italian origin, later in Dutch tulips and other florals, often too vividly colored.

The distinguishing feature of the turned legs of many William and Mary chairs and cabinets, is the inverted cups. It may be said in a general way that Dutch forms often show turning where Flemish forms show carving.

Queen Anne (1702-1714) was the sister of Mary, and the daughter of James II. In her reign, French and Dutch influence was less

apparent. Queen Anne furniture looks more like that of Louis XIV than does most Charles II furniture or William and Mary furniture. The backs of chairs are lower than during the preceding reigns, and begin commonly to have splats running down the middle to the seat. This last is a startling innovation, and one that continues throughout the Georgian period until 1760. An interesting grouping of Queen Anne furniture is that in her bed room at Hampton Court, all in the style of Louis XIV. Lacquer work in the Chinese style, which had begun as a fad in the reign of Charles II when young ladies at boarding school learned it as a fashionable accomplishment, largely superseded inlay on case furniture during the reign of Queen Anne.

The difference between Jacobean and the last half of the Seventeenth Century, is clearly suggested by the architects dominant in each. The principal architect of the Jacobean period, during which the Italian influence was still dominant, was Inigo Jones, who formed himself in Italy on the style of Palladio, not only studying the latter's splendid buildings still to be seen at Vicenza, but also bringing home and continuously using Palladio's famous book on Italian architecture.

About Sir Christopher Wren, the leading English architect of the last half of the Seventeenth Century there was nothing Italian. He never visited Italy, but he adored France. When he returned from Paris in 1665, it was his boast that he brought back with him "all France on paper," meaning that he had drawings, prints, and books, illustrating all the finest French architecture. Upon the accession of William and Mary, Wren was commissioned to build at Hampton Court an imitation of the splendor of Versailles. Hampton Court Palace is not only a splendid example of the English architecture of the period, but it also contains much interesting furniture. Hampton Court, fifteen miles southwest of London, is open to the public daily. But, of course, if one wants to study English furniture seriously, the best place in the world is the Victoria and Albert Museum, in London.

In connection with Sir Christopher Wren, I must not forget to mention Grinling Gibbon, the greatest of English carvers in wood, much of whose brilliant work is illustrated in this volume. The genius of Gibbon was such that with his chisel he was constantly creating in wood forms which, until actually accomplished, seemed beyond the power of the art, and unwise even to attempt.

One of a series now in an American country house

ENGLISH ELIZABETHAN CARVED WOOD PANELING

In the Victoria and Albert Museum. From an old house at Exeter

ENGLISH ELIZABETHAN WOODWORK

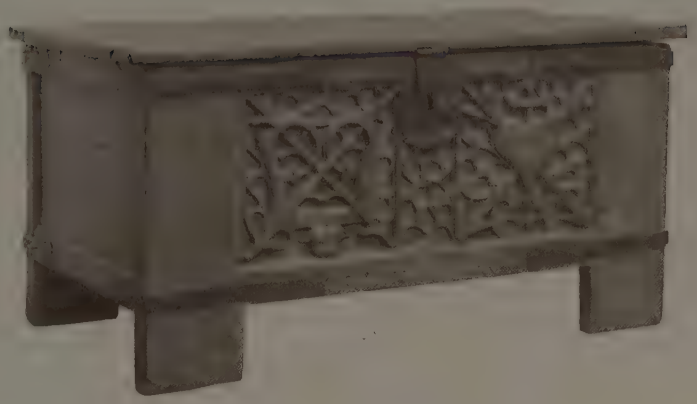
Room from Rotherwas, Hereford, England

Julius Caesar room from Rotherwas, Hereford, England

Room said to have been once occupied by James I

OLD ENGLISH WOODWORK AND PLASTER, NOW IN AMERICA

From the "Old Palace" of James I erected at Bromley-by-Bow, a suburb of London, and dated 1606. Now in the Victoria and Albert Museum



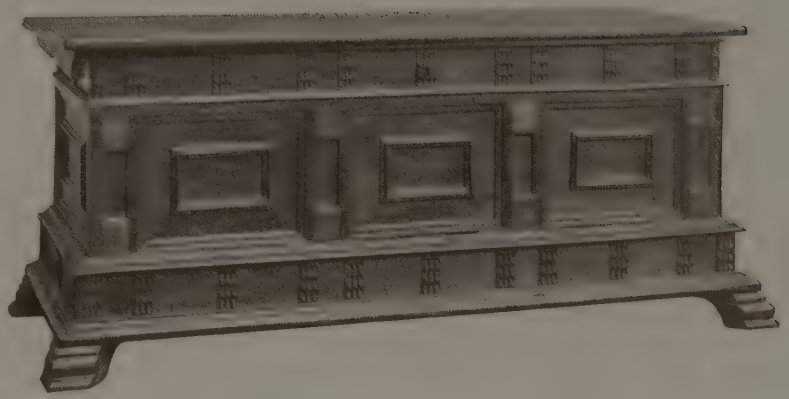
ENGLISH GOTHIC AND ELIZABETHAN CHESTS

ENGLISH JACOBEAN CHESTS

(1)

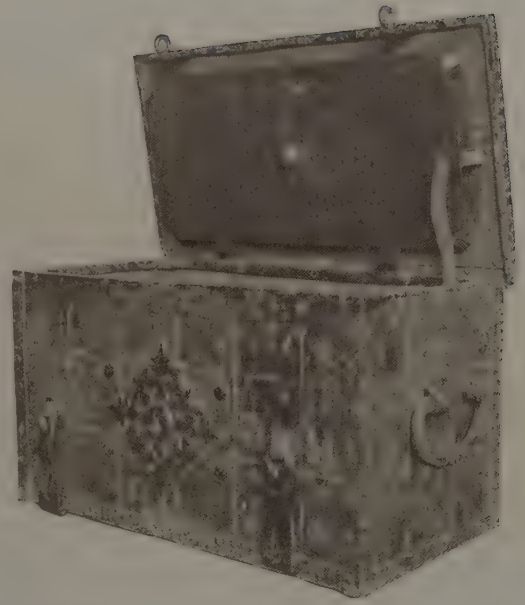
(2)

(3)

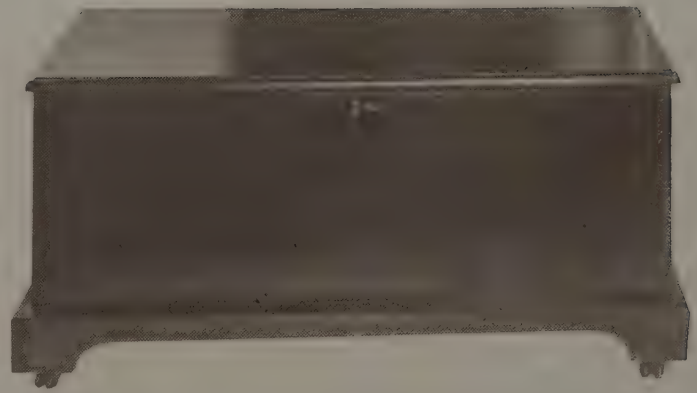


(4)

Figure (4) shows the applied moldings characteristic of the Late Jacobean



Seventeenth Century iron strongbox of German workmanship

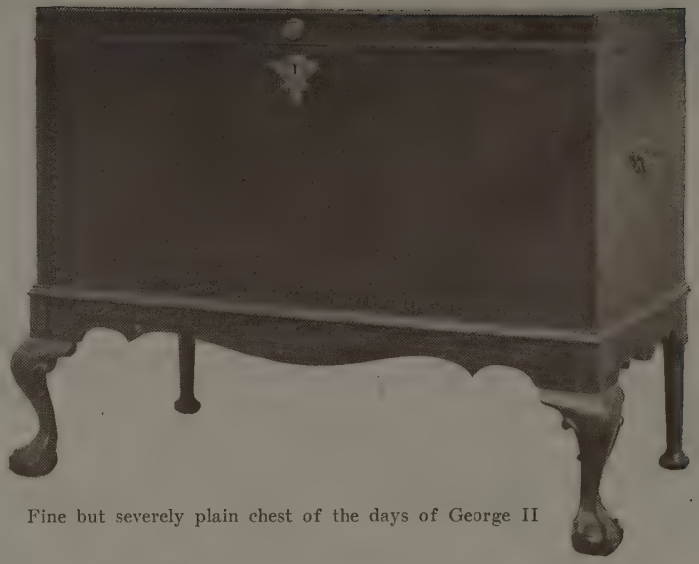


Early Nineteenth Century chest of cherry made in America after the style of the old Mississippi River sugar chests

Early Nineteenth Century chest left by a Scotchman in a wayside inn between New York and Boston. Whether made in America or in Scotland is not known

A cherry chest made in the Ohio valley in the Early Nineteenth Century. It represents a step in the development of the chest of drawers

Early Jacobean cupboard with two curious ornamental renderings of the thistle



Fine but severely plain chest of the days of George II

The progenitor of the modern chest of drawers, a transitional piece between the Jacobean and William and Mary periods

A typical iron strongbox of German workmanship, of which many were made from 1650 to 1750

CHESTS OF CONTRASTING STYLES

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

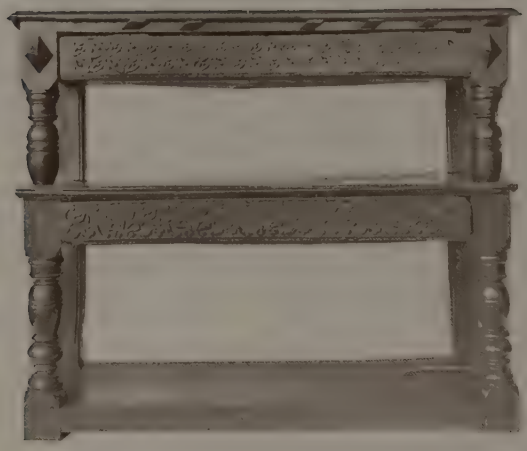
(6)

(1) Inlaid with bone. (5) In leather with elaborate metal mounts

Elizabethan carved and inlaid cupboard, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Oak stool with carved medallions, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Elizabethan beds, the one on the right from Sizergh Castle and dated 1568



With posts less bulbous than in Elizabethan

Elizabethan with characteristic tree forms under round arches

ENGLISH JACOBEAN CUPBOARD AND TABLE

Showing the applied moldings and half-spindles characteristic of the last half of the Seventeenth Century

LATE JACOBEAN FURNITURE

Beech side chair carved in Flemish scrolls

Walnut arm chair upholstered in ancient needlework

ENGLISH CHARLES II CHAIRS IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(1), (2), (4) Chippendale; (3) Charles II

ENGLISH CHAIRS OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

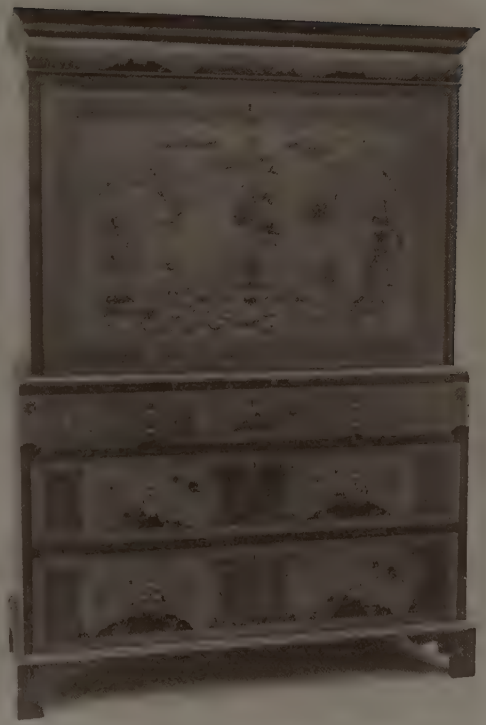
Upholstered in old English needlework

ENGLISH CHARLES II WALNUT CHAIRS IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Queen Anne

William and Mary

ENGLISH MARQUETRY OF WILLIAM AND MARY, AND ANNE



(1)

(2)

(3)

Marquetry pattern of (1) borrowed from Chinese lacquer-work

ENGLISH WILLIAM AND MARY MARQUETRY CABINETS

QUEEN ANNE LACQUER CONTRASTED WITH WILLIAM AND MARY MARQUETRY

ENGLISH WILLIAM AND MARY MARQUETRY CABINET

Charles II chair, child's high chair, and daybed

ENGLISH BAROQUE FURNITURE IN CANE AND WALNUT

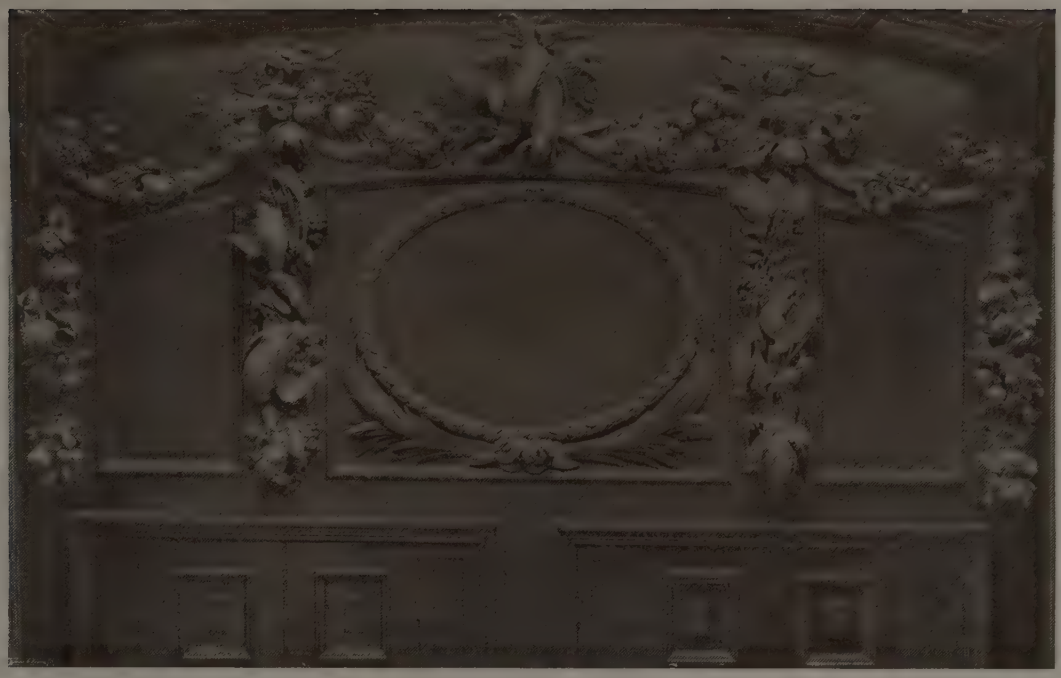
Charles II chest of drawers

William and Mary cabinet

ENGLISH SEVENTEENTH CENTURY MARQUETRY FURNITURE

Note the interesting hardware

ENGLISH QUEEN ANNE SECRETARIES



At Windsor Castle in the western recess of the king's ante-chamber

Picture frame at Hampton Court

From the Canfield Collection

GRINLING GIBBON MIRROR FRAME

CHAPTER XI

Installed at No. 5 Great George Street about 1750

GEORGIAN PINE PANELING FROM WESTMINSTER

CHAPTER XI

LATER ENGLISH FURNITURE

Early Georgian (George I), Chippendale, Adam, Hepplewhite, Sheraton

In England, as in France, the Eighteenth Century is the great furniture century. In the Eighteenth Century, for the first time there began to be furniture for everybody. Ceremonial life was no longer emphasized at the expense of home life, and new furniture forms were created for every possible use.

In the Eighteenth Century, English furniture styles continue to trail those of France. The period of George I and George II (1714-1760) is very properly called the Georgian Rococo period, although I shall also refer to the period of George I (1714-1727) as Early Georgian, and to the period George II (1727-1760) as the Chippendale period.

In England, as in France, during the Georgian period furniture and decoration become Rococo, but architecture remains Classic, though simpler and lighter, especially in France, than the Baroque architecture of the Seventeenth Century.

During the Georgian period, English architects fought in vain to keep furniture and decorations Classic. William Kent in his effort to revive the Italian style of Inigo Jones, designed a little of the best and much of the worst furniture ever made. His passion for architectural ornament as distinguished from decoration, was such that, being asked to design a gown for a great Lady, he adorned the skirt with columns of the Five Orders.

Despite the efforts of Kent, most Early Georgian furniture is a natural development from that of Queen Anne. The chairs have lower backs, the legs are developed in the direction of Rococo, and Mahogany largely takes the place of Walnut.

Even in the middle of the century, the architects were still fighting against French and Chinese Rococo. Isaac Ware wrote in his book on "Classic Architecture," published in 1756:

"It is our misfortune to see at this time an unmeaning scrawl of C's inverted, turned and hooked together take the place of Greek and Roman elegance, even in our most expensive decorations. This is not because the possessor thinks there is, or can be, elegance in such fond, weak, ill-jointed and unmeaning figures; it is usually because it is French; and fashion commands that whatever is French is to be admired as fine."

Also,

"While these French decorations were driving out from the inside of our homes the ceilings which Burlington and Kent had taught us to introduce from Roman temples, and those ornaments of doors which a better taste under Inigo Jones had formed upon the models of the best Roman structures, the Gothic seemed to have seized upon pavilions, and the Chinese on rooms of pleasure."

And later:

"The French have furnished us with abundance of fanciful decorations for these purposes (ceilings and panels) little less barbarous than the Gothic."

But he concludes by recommending a ceiling pattern which the illustration shows to be Louis XV.

Elsewhere in the same book, Ware laments that "Paper has taken the place of sculpture," by paper meaning wall-paper, and by sculpture, architectural columns and pilasters and pediments and moldings in wood or plaster.

Wall-paper began to be much used in England in the Georgian period, and must have aroused Ware's wrath, not only because it displaced wood and plaster, but also because it was largely of Chinese origin, while a large proportion of the early French and English wall-papers bore designs that were Chinese (more or less) in character, or Chinese and Rococo mixed.

The introduction of wall-paper and the elimination of heavy interior architectural and sculptural forms in wood and plaster naturally demanded chairs and furniture of an entirely new type.

Chippendale was the furniture genius who responded best to this demand. In my judgment, Chippendale is the greatest maker of chairs who ever lived. He developed the art of making chairs to its

highest point. He surpassed not only those who came before him, but those who came after. His equal has not yet appeared.

Chippendale understood the art of construction. His chairs stand square upon their four legs. The backs resist all efforts to wrench them apart. The heaviest man can lean against them safely. Chippendale chairs are beautiful. The lines that make them strong are graceful lines. The composition of legs and arms and back is admirable. Merely as design they delight the eye.

Chippendale was the master of Mahogany. He carved it and pierced it sympathetically. Every line of his ornament grows naturally out of this dark, tough wood.

Chippendale was no purist. Like Shakespeare, he assimilated from every source. Dutch and Rococo, Chinese and Gothic, were all alike to him, and he often mixed together two or more of them.

The legs of Chippendale chairs are of two types, curved and straight. The curved legs are Rococo S's, but like all English Rococo, apt to be heavier than French Rococo of the same period and often, like many earlier English chairs, with claw and ball feet. These claw and ball feet though often said to show the claw of the Chinese dragon clutching the Pearl of Wisdom, really show eagle claw or lion paw clutching the globe of the world, and are of Classic origin.

The straight legs of Chippendale chairs are Chinese in origin, derived from the straight legs found in so many Chinese chairs. Often the origin of these straight legs is obvious, because of the carving in the Chinese style.

When Chippendale published the first edition of his celebrated book of furniture designs, "The Gentleman and Cabinetmaker's Director," in 1754, his reputation was already established. He felt himself a leader, and was confident that "Every design in the book can be improved both as to Beauty and Enrichment, in the execution of it, by Their most obedient servant, THOMAS CHIPPENDALE."

Only a small percentage of furniture properly called Chippendale was made in Chippendale's shop. Other cabinetmakers copied his designs with his approbation and encouragement. This is shown by the list of subscribers to his book, a large proportion of whom were his business rivals.

The Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries in England saw a great development of highboys and other two-storied furniture. Chests of drawers and cabinets and bookcases with folding doors,

were superposed upon tables and other chests of drawers built especially to carry them.

Chippendale commodes assume various forms and shapes, and are often adorned with Chinese fretwork. It is the fashion today to call almost any furniture decorated with Chinese fretwork, Chinese Chippendale.

Other Chippendale commodes were copied obviously from French originals, though utterly unlike them except in general contour. They not only lack the delicate marquetry, but also the exquisite ormolu mounts, the place of which is taken by carved ornament in wood. Also, being made of mahogany, they are darker than any of the French commodes, except some of those lacquered in the Chinese style.

It is not easy to confuse French furniture of the Louis XIV and Louis XV periods with English furniture of similar inspiration. This is especially true of the chairs. All four legs of the French chairs are alike and equally well finished. The hind legs of the English chairs are skimped and slant back towards each other.

English furniture of these periods also shows more natural wood, and less marquetry and less gilding. The contrast in this respect between Chippendale chairs and commodes and Louis XV chairs and commodes is extreme.

THE ADAM PERIOD

The period 1760-1792 is properly called the Adam Period, because during those years the influence of the great English architect, Robert Adam, was dominant, not only in architecture, but also in decoration and furniture. This is the period contemporary with the Classic Revival of Louis XVI of France, but, owing largely to the individuality of Adam, the influence of English furniture of this period upon French was considerable. Although one French writer has suggested that Adam copied from Directoire, this would hardly seem probable as Adam died before Directoire began.

Robert Adam was better equipped than anyone else in Europe to lead a Classic Revival. He knew more about ancient Roman architecture and decoration than anyone else, except possibly the great Italian, Piranesi. In England he had the opportunity for architectural and decorative creation which was lacking in Italy in the Eighteenth Century. He spent three years in France and Italy, studying ancient Roman remains, and made many splendid drawings, many of

which are in the famous Soane Collection in London. He even crossed the Adriatic in order to get first-hand knowledge of Diocletian's Palace at Spalato in Dalmatia, and after his return to London published a beautiful and elaborately illustrated book on the subject.

Of furniture designed by Robert Adam, there is much to be found in the monumental book published by himself and his brother on the work of their firm. Considerable furniture made after his designs has also come down to us and is preserved in various collections. But more important than the furniture he designed himself, is the furniture designed and made by different cabinetmakers under his direction or influence, notably by Hepplewhite.

Even Chippendale made furniture after the designs of Robert Adam, some of which is still preserved at Osterly and Harewood. Horace Walpole, after visiting Osterly in 1773, wrote:

"On Friday we went to see—oh! the place of places! . . . . such expense! such taste! such profusion! There is a hall, library, breakfast room, eating room, all chefs d'oeuvre of Adam . . . . The chairs are taken from antique lyres and make a charming harmony."

The Adam Period is not only a Classic Period, and a straight-line period as contrasted with the Rococo curves of the preceding period, but it is also a period in which marquetry and delicately painted ornament supplanted carving. It is called the Age of Satinwood, because of the common use of satinwood veneers. The earlier inlays of the Adam Period were on a large scale—Classical heads, human figures, broken columns, and vases. As the style progressed, the inlays became delicate, consisting principally of thin honey-suckle ornament and foliated scrolls, and above all else, fanleaved discs and ovals.

Between Hepplewhite and Sheraton furniture there is great difference. Hepplewhite forms still show many curves, warmed with the spirit of Rococo, but tamed to Classic balance. The furniture of Sheraton, on the other hand, is hard, and dry, and spindly, like late Louis XVI and Directoire.

The difference may be attributed partly to the superior taste of Hepplewhite, and partly to the earlier period at which he worked. Hepplewhite died in 1786, and his book was published in 1788, by his widow. Sheraton did not arrive in London until 1790, and his first book was published in 1791.

Moreover, the fame of Chippendale and Hepplewhite rests less on their books than on what they actually made in their shops. The fame of Sheraton depends on what he taught others to do. There is no evidence to show that Sheraton ever had a shop in London. His business was making books and selling designs.

Compared with Georgian Rococo furniture, the furniture of the Adam period is light in color, slender and delicate, harmonizing with the gentle architectural backgrounds of the Classic Revival. During the first half of the Eighteenth Century English furniture and especially English interior architecture were much heavier and had much more carved ornament than French furniture and interior architecture. During the last half of the Eighteenth Century the opposite was true. English furniture and architecture under the leadership of Robert Adam became lighter, flatter and slenderer than French. Adam openly declared in his "Works in Architecture," that private residences had been groaning long enough under the weight of ceilings copied in the Sixteenth Century from Roman temples and public buildings. He proposed to reintroduce scale, and in the execution of domestic interiors, to study ancient Roman domestic examples. Hence, the lightness and slenderness of Adam interiors as contrasted with these of William Kent and Inigo Jones. Hence, the comparative triviality of Adam pediments and tabernacles, and the Adam compo ornament that compared with Jacobean molded plaster ceilings is hardly visible. No wonder that English architects of Palladian inspiration still call Adam "weak".

Above, Early Georgian. Below, Chippendale

EARLY GEORGIAN CONTRASTED WITH CHIPPENDALE

ENGLISH EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CHESTS OF DRAWERS

From the Canfield Collection

ENGLISH CHINESE CHIPPENDALE

(1)

(2)

(3)

(1) and (3) From the Canfield Collection

ENGLISH CHINESE CHIPPENDALE

CHIPPENDALE CHAIRS IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

(1)

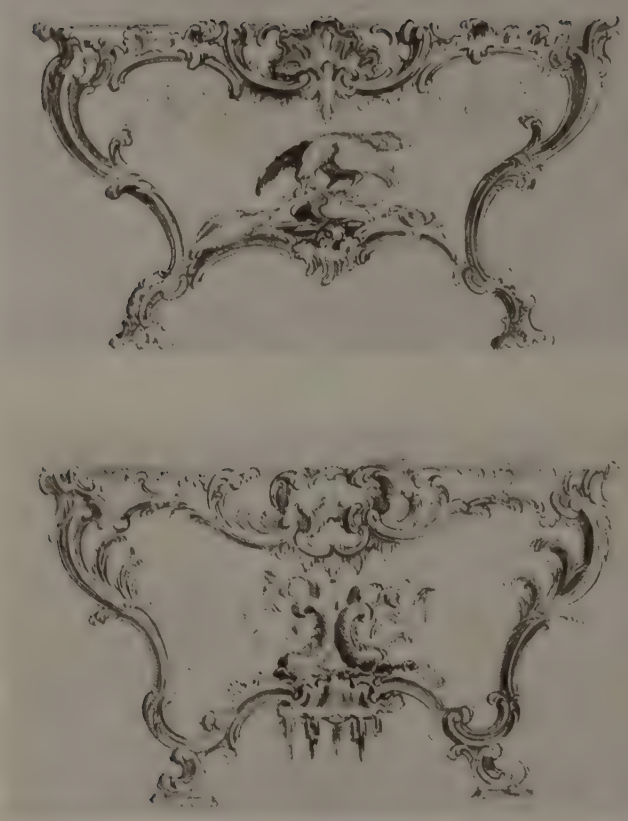
(2)

(1) Ancient Chippendale chest of drawers on richly carved stand. (2) Modern American bed inspired by (1)

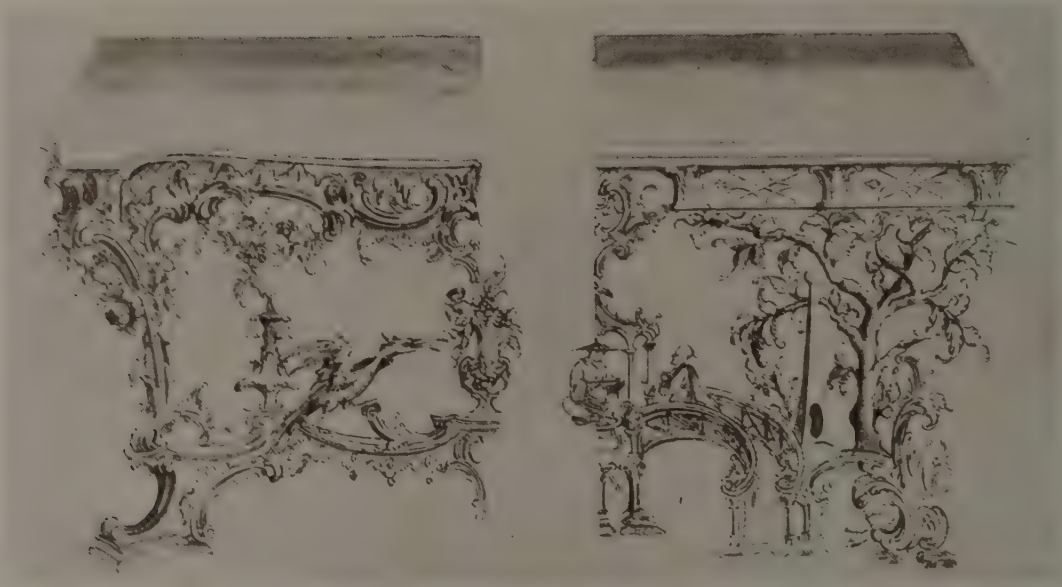
ANCIENT AND MODERN CHIPPENDALE FURNITURE

In the residence of the late Henry P. Davison, New York

CHIPPENDALE CARVED MAHOGANY BOOKCASE



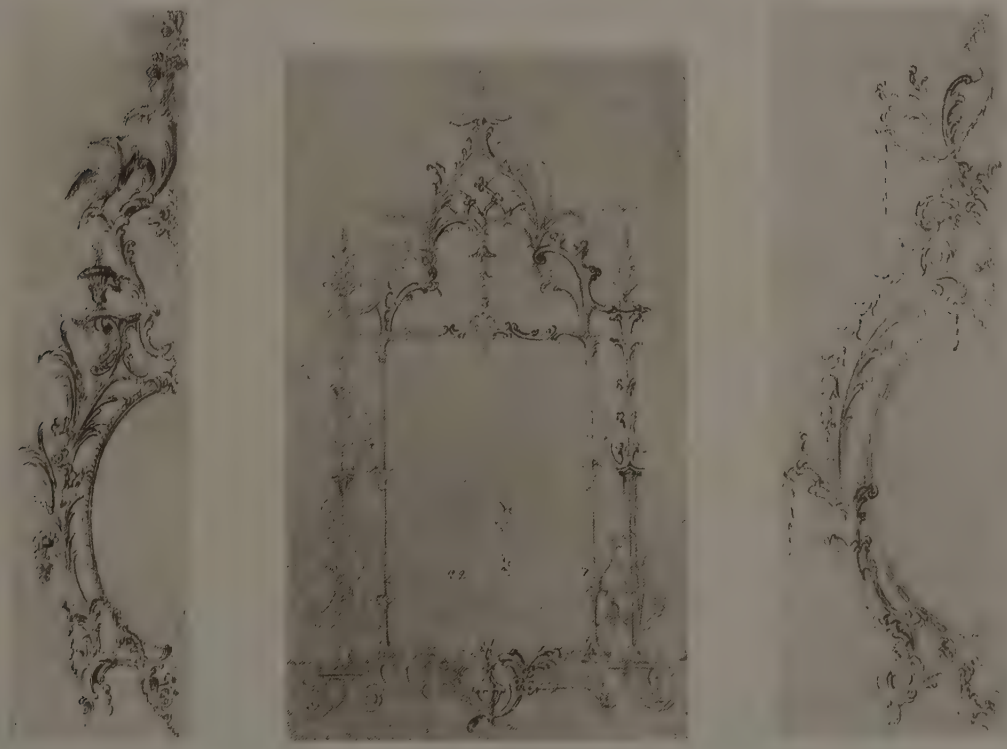
Rococo console tables



Tables rich in Chinese Rococo

Lambrequin

Overmantel mirrors

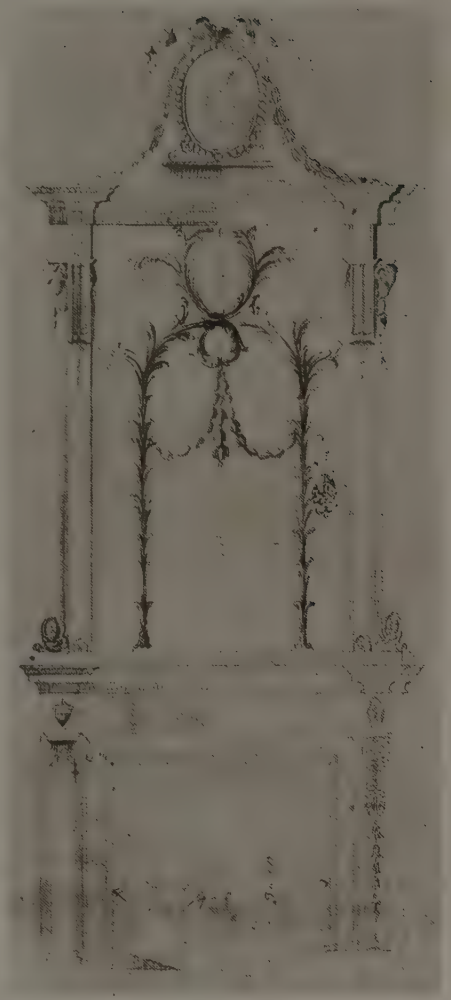


Mirror frames

Wrought iron fanlight in the Adam style

Chippendale Rococo commode, from the Canfield Collection

CHIPPENDALE ROCOCO CONTRASTED WITH ADAM CLASSIC



Classic Revival chimneypiece

Chimneypiece in Rococo, Chinese and Gothic

Rococo couch with canopy

David Garrick's bed with embroidered hangings of the period. From his villa at Hampton. Presented by W. E. Trevor to the Victoria and Albert Museum

FAMOUS ENGLISH FOURPOSTER OF THE ADAM PERIOD

David Garrick's chiffonier and wardrobe, from his villa at Hampton. The decorations are in green and gold. Presented by W. E. Trevor to the Victoria and Albert Museum

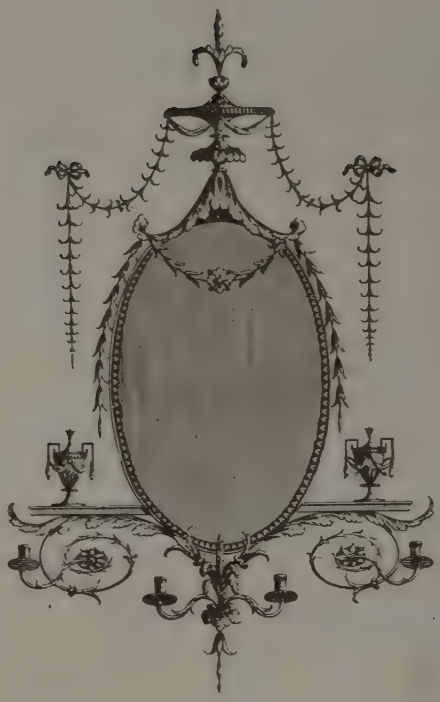
Daybed in the style of Adam, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

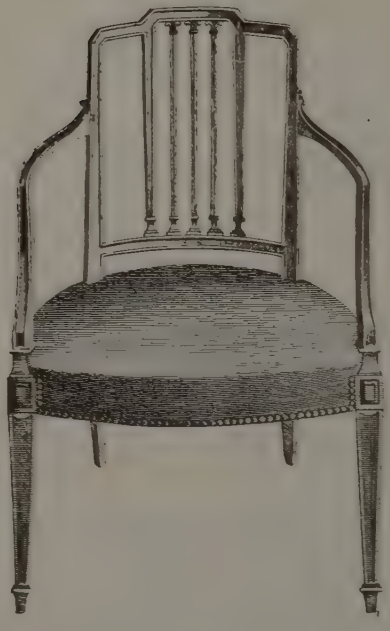
Table in the style of Chippendale

ENGLISH CHIPPENDALE CONTRASTED WITH ADAM

In the residence of the Earl of Derby, London. Painted panels by Angelica Kauffman

ENGLISH ADAM COMMODE





From his "Cabinetmaker and Upholsterer's Guide"

HEPPLEWHITE FURNITURE DESIGNS

ENGLISH CHAIRS OF THE ADAM PERIOD

Style of Chippendale, about 1745

Style of Adam, about 1785

Empire Style, about 1820

Empire Style, about 1805

ENGLISH CHIPPENDALE, ADAM, AND EMPIRE MIRRORS

Wainscot mirror, about 1780

Picture mirror, about 1825

White enameled mantel mirror, with egg cornice, group pilasters, about 1785

ENGLISH CLASSIC REVIVAL MIRRORS

About 1770

About 1785

About 1750

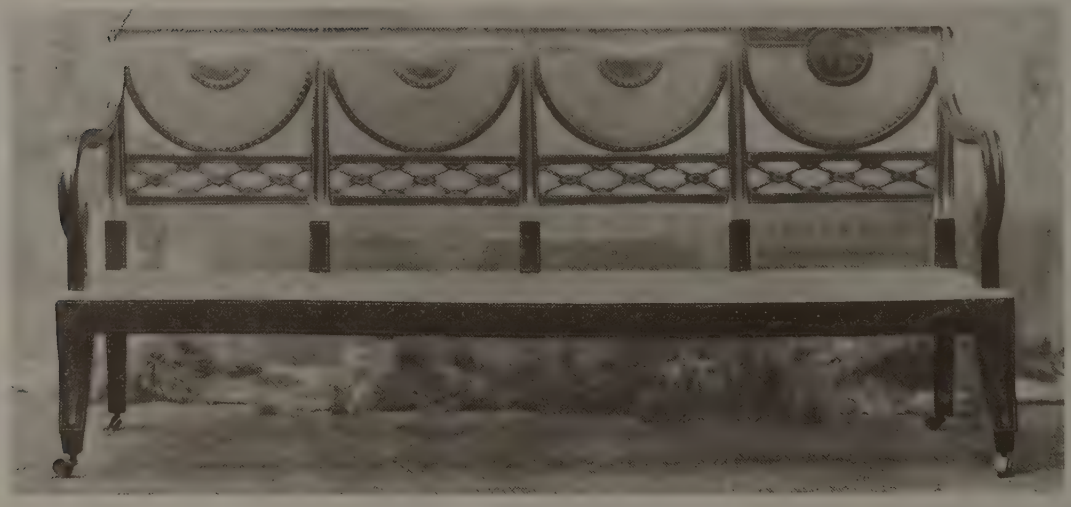
ENGLISH EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MIRRORS

Chippendale Rococo from the Canfield Collection

Queen Anne red lacquer

Chippendale Rococo

ENGLISH EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MIRRORS



ENGLISH SHERATON SETTEES

ENGLISH SHERATON SIDEBOARDS

Italian Early Nineteenth Century

English Georgian, about 1745

American Empire

Dutch Empire

SMALL TABLES OF CONTRASTING STYLES

In the Metropolitan Museum of Art

ENGLISH LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY DESK

Sheraton

Chippendale

Both in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

ENGLISH SHERATON CONTRASTED WITH CHIPPENDALE

From the Eighteenth and Late Seventeenth Centuries.
In the collections of the Misses Harriet and Claudia Darrell

ANCIENT ENGLISH CEDAR FURNITURE, MADE IN BERMUDA

From the Eighteenth and Late Seventeenth Centuries.
In the collections of the Misses Harriet and Claudia Darrell

ANCIENT ENGLISH CEDAR FURNITURE, MADE IN BERMUDA

CHAPTER XII

AMERICAN COLONIAL FURNITURE IN THE ESSEX INSTITUTE, SALEM, MASS.

CHAPTER XII

AMERICAN COLONIAL FURNITURE

When asked to define Colonial, I always like to say that, "Just as Colonial is a mixture of all styles, so Mission is the absence of any," thus killing two birds with one stone. While this epigram, like most epigrams, is an exaggeration, it contains so much truth that it is immensely helpful in the effort to understand what American Colonial really is.

While I frankly admit that the term Colonial should have been confined to furniture made or used in America by European colonists before 1776, common usage inclines me to continue to include under the title Colonial, furniture made in America as late as 1840. The greater part of this furniture is of English inheritance, with the Dutch inheritance strong in New York before the American Revolution, the German inheritance strong in Pennsylvania, and the French inheritance strong in Louisiana.

Inasmuch as the English inheritance was itself a mixed one (see Chapters X and XI), it is clear that American Colonial if not a mixture of all styles, is at least a mixture of many. Furthermore, the close connection of the Atlantic Coast and especially of New England, with all parts of the world by sea, introduced Chinese and other forms directly.

However, the backbone of American Colonial of all periods is English. The principal styles with which we have to deal in the study of American Colonial are Jacobean, William and Mary, Queen Anne, Early Georgian, Chippendale, Sheraton, and English and French Empire. While the Adam influence was strong in architecture, little Adam or Hepplewhite furniture was imported or made.

American Colonial furniture as compared with the English originals was provincial and apt to be made in an inferior manner. But

the best pieces, made here by immigrant English cabinetmakers, are difficult and sometimes impossible to distinguish from the English originals. As a rule, however, the cabinetmakers who emigrated from England, were not the best and most successful cabinetmakers, and the apprentices trained here seldom acquired the skill of their masters. Not only are the shapes inferior, even when copied directly from English examples, but inferior woods are often used.

The use of different woods was not always a disadvantage. Many of the highboys and lowboys in maple are of sufficient excellence to bear comparison with the most interesting examples made in mahogany and other woods abroad.

Evidently, much of the English furniture brought to America came from provincial England rather than from London, and I have found it very interesting to compare various pieces of English provincial furniture with American Colonial of similar inspiration.

In the splendid collection of Colonial furniture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, much of which was given by Mrs. Russell Sage, it is possible to make a comparative study of American furniture forms.

One of the most interesting developments is that of case furniture, from the chests used primarily as trunks by the early colonists of the Seventeenth Century, to the beautifully constructed and finished highboys and lowboys in mahogany, made by William Savery of Philadelphia, in the third quarter of the Eighteenth Century.

We begin with the rough Jacobean chests which constituted most of the furniture brought over before 1650. Many of them are mere boxes with a lid, with little carving. Others have ball feet and simple scratch carving or Jacobean trees and arches of the simpler type.

Next we see the chests with a drawer at the bottom. Then, chests with two drawers at the bottom. Then, chests of drawers, without a lid. Then, two-story furniture, chests on chests, or cabinets with swinging doors on tables or chests and made as part of them though easily separable.

Side by side with the Jacobean chests, we see Jacobean cupboards with applied half spindles and other moldings, sometimes in ebony, or wood colored to look like ebony.

The most interesting early examples of American-made highboys are in the style of William and Mary, with turned legs carrying inverted cups, and with sinuous stretchers holding the lower part of the

structure together. Instead of the elaborate marquetry often found in England at this period, we are apt to have burl walnut veneers, dark and rather muddy, but interesting.

Much of this William and Mary furniture was made in America after the style of Queen Anne had already become ascendant in England. Indeed, it may be said of American Colonial furniture generally that the styles tend to trail ten or fifteen years behind the corresponding English styles.

During the Eighteenth Century, the quality of American cabinet work constantly improved. Many of the Chippendale models are really splendid examples of the furniture maker's art. But it is significant, that the best pieces in most collections of American Colonial furniture, are apt to be pieces made in England. For instance, in the noteworthy Pendleton Collection in Providence.

Until the beginning of the Twentieth Century, collections of American Colonial furniture were apt to be assembled and displayed unintelligently. Rooms furnished in the Colonial style were filled with junk of all periods, bewildering to the beholder and not calculated to develop appreciation of the beautiful. There was seldom sufficient knowledge of English styles to classify types correctly, and it was taken for granted that all kinds of American Colonial went together.

Today, the contrary is true. American homes contain many Colonial interiors, some with ancient, some with modern furniture, which are worthy reproductions of our ancestral environment. While some of these interiors are definitely English in plan and execution, others have deliberately developed the qualities that distinguish American Colonial.

Books that have greatly assisted to this progress in matters of style, are those by Luke Vincent Lockwood on "Colonial Furniture," as well as an earlier book on "Colonial Furniture of New England," by Irving Whithall Lyon. A great impulse was also given by the Hudson-Fulton Loan Exhibition of American Furniture, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in 1909. More recent books are Wallace Nutting's "Furniture of the Pilgrim Century" (1620-1720), and Fiske Kimball's "Domestic Architecture of the American Colonials and of the Early Republic." Mr. Kimball's accurate scholarship has arranged and dated for us facts indispensable in the proper backgrounding of American furniture.

Another splendid inspiration to proper appreciation of what our ancestors accomplished was the Loan Exhibition of Duncan Phyfe Furniture, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, last year. More than one hundred pieces of furniture from the workshop of the New York cabinetmaker, Duncan Phyfe, were shown, limited to Phyfe's best period which was before 1825. This was the most important group of early furniture by a single American cabinetmaker ever assembled. The brief descriptive catalogue published in the Museum Bulletin, was admirably supplemented by Charles Over Cornelius with his book entitled, "Furniture Masterpieces of Duncan Phyfe."

Born in Scotland, Duncan Phyfe came with his parents to America in 1783 or 1784. The family settled in Albany, where Duncan then sixteen years of age, worked at the cabinetmaker's trade. Early in the 1790's he came to New York, and finally set up his shop, in 1795, in Partition Street (now Fulton Street), where he stayed for the rest of his days. Aided by the patronage of the Astors and other leading New York families, which was due to the high quality of his design and workmanship, his reputation grew apace and orders came from as far as Philadelphia.

The best of Phyfe's furniture is far more interesting than most of that illustrated in the books of Sheraton. Made of mahogany, and inspired by English and French furniture of the period, it has many of the charms of French Directoire, but greater warmth. The legs of chairs and tables and sofas are largely Greek or late Louis XVI, with many flutings that accentuate the Classic spirit.

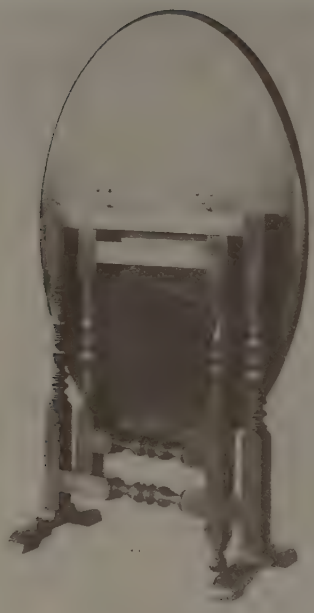
Phyfe seems to have come nearer to having a style of his own than any other early American cabinetmaker. He is the only one to whom a large group of furniture can be attributed on documentary grounds.

Oak chest of drawers, about 1690

Connecticut sunflower chest

AMERICAN LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CHESTS

Pine work table



Tuckaway table

Four-gate with drawer for silver

Butterfly gate-leg

AMERICAN LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY TABLES

In the Metropolitan Museum of Art

AMERICAN LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY OAK CHEST

Simple and low, but of prime importance as a decorative document. Unpainted pine paneling with fireplace and cupboard from a house in Coventry, Conn. About 1730

In carved pine, with slight metal mounts, made late in the century

Simple Early American Colonial woodwork assembled in a Massachusetts house

Ornate Eighteenth Century woodwork from the Howlett homestead, Woodbury, Long Island, preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

(1) (2) (3)

(2) and (3) By William Savery of Philadelphia, 1760-75

AMERICAN COLONIAL HIGHBOYS IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

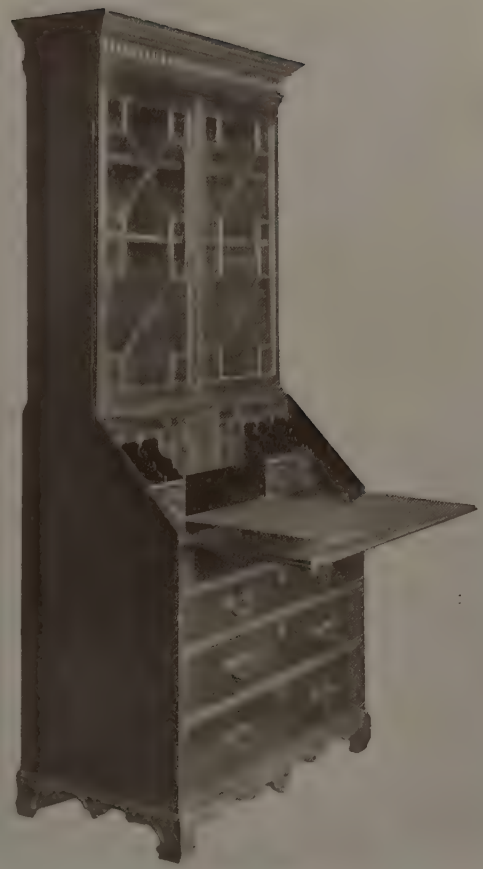
English William and Mary

American Queen Anne about 1725, gold ornament in relief on black ground

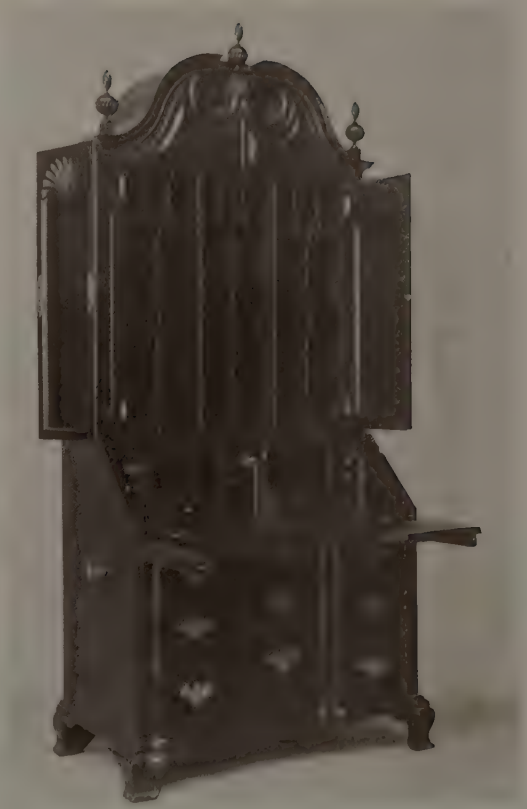
English Queen Anne

ANCIENT ENGLISH LACQUERED HIGHBOYS CONTRASTED WITH AMERICAN

Made in Philadelphia about 1770. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art

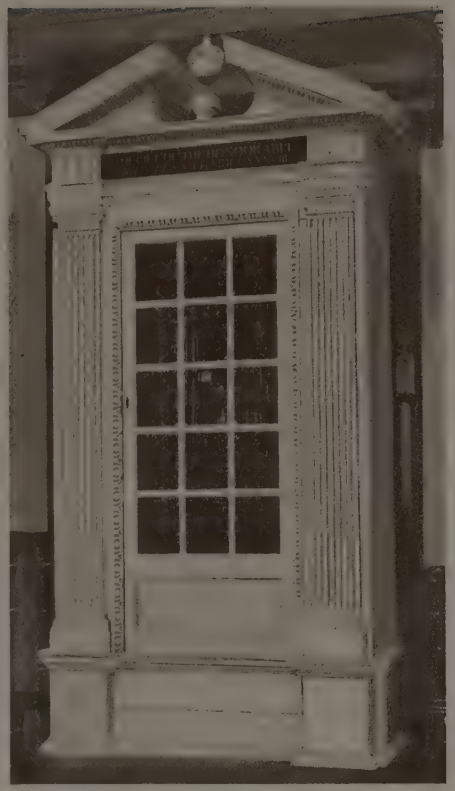


Modern American



Made in Rhode Island about 1770. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art

AMERICAN ROCOCO HIGHBOYS, ANCIENT AND MODERN



American, about 1739. Presented to the Philadelphia Library by William Penn

English, about 1770

English, about 1730

ANCIENT ENGLISH AND AMERICAN FURNITURE CONTRASTED

(1) Queen Anne fiddleback

(2) Early Georgian cabriole legs

(3) Early Georgian roundabout

(4) Chippendale roundabout

(5) Early Nineteenth Century

(6) Ladder back Chippendale

(7) By Duncan Phyfe

(8) By Duncan Phyfe

(9) By Duncan Phyfe

All in the Metropolitan Museum of Art except (3), (7), (8)

EARLY AMERICAN CHAIRS

Made in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries

EARLY AMERICAN CHAIRS IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Slat backs below, banister backs above. Early Eighteenth Century. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art

EARLY AMERICAN CHAIRS

From the Eighteenth Century. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art

EARLY AMERICAN WINDSOR CHAIRS

Top of highboy

Panel from highboy, 1760-75

DETAILS OF ROCOCO MAHOGANY FURNITURE BY WILLIAM SAVERY OF PHILADELPHIA

Made probably in Philadelphia between 1760 and 1775. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art

AMERICAN CHIPPENDALE TABLES IN MAHOGANY AND MARBLE

(1) English

(2) English

(3) American

(2) Showing draped urn and Prince of Wales' plume in back. (3) Made in America about 1790. Now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN SHERATON CHAIRS

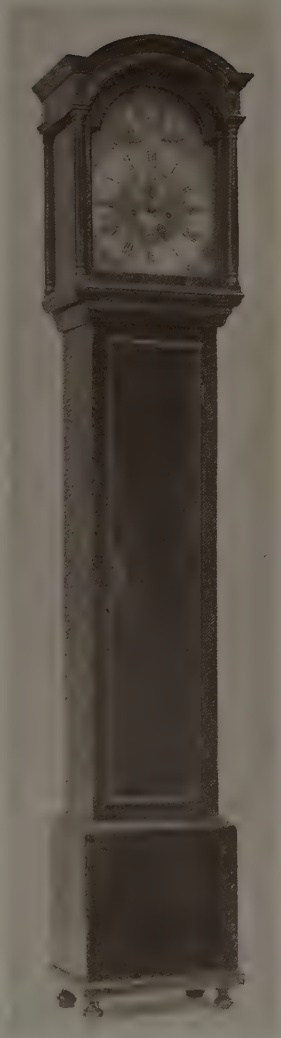
American Queen Anne

English Chippendale

American Early Nineteenth Century, painted

CHAIRS OF CONTRASTING STYLES

AMERICAN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FURNITURE AT INDIA HOUSE, NEW YORK



(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(1) Clock by Samuel Bagnall, Boston, about 1750. (2) Sheraton mixing table, Baltimore, about 1800. (3) Block-front desk made for Brig. Gen. Ebenezer Huntington of Norwich, Conn., about 1765. (4) Sheraton sewing table, about 1800. (5) Early Georgian card table, about 1740. (6) Clock by Thomas Harland of Norwich, Conn., about 1790

AMERICAN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FURNITURE IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

English Sheraton chair, cane seat and painted

English Hepplewhite chair, rush seat and painted

American Empire settee upholstered in rushes (modern) and painted

ANCIENT ENGLISH AND AMERICAN PAINTED FURNITURE

In the Barnes residence, Manhasset, Long Island

ANCIENT AMERICAN CABINET WITH CLOCK, STYLE OF SHERATON

(1)

(2)

(3)

(1) and (2) Made about 1795. (3) Made about 1780

AMERICAN HEPPLEWHITE AND CHIPPENDALE CHAIRS

Empire, made in Kentucky

Inlaid desk, in the manner of Sheraton

Made in Charleston, by John McAfee

Simple but charming, in the manner of Sheraton

By Duncan Phyfe

By John Hewitt

By Duncan Phyfe

Three standard table, by Duncan Phyfe

Designed and made by Peter Cooper, founder of Cooper Union Institute, for his residence in New York City, but afterwards moved by him to Ringwood Manor, N. J., where they still are

(1)

(2)

(3)

All characteristic except (3), that it is hardly right to attribute to the master

Made by Duncan Phyfe about 1800, in the collection of R. T. Haines Halsey

English Early Chippendale

ENGLISH CHIPPENDALE CONTRASTED WITH AMERICAN PHYFE

Mahogany, in the style of Phyfe, with knife boxes

AMERICAN PHYFE SIDEBOARD

CHAPTER XIII

MODERN FRENCH FURNITURE BY GALLEREY

CHAPTER XIII

MODERN EUROPEAN FURNITURE

French, English, German, Austrian

The Nineteenth Century was emphatically a period of Bad Taste. For nearly one hundred years the ideals of Art went wrong. The French Revolution had destroyed esthetic traditions and standards necessary for appreciation as well as for creation.

The Nineteenth Century was emphatically a period of Humbug. Barnum understood not only the American public but also the European public. Simplicity was the shibboleth, but Paradox was the Golden Calf. Art was even valued in proportion to the fidelity with which it impressed the ignorant observer as copying Nature.

Unduly the picture arts were exalted at the expense of the decorative arts, being gloried as "fine" while the latter were depreciated as "industrial". A poor portrait, or a bad landscape, or a Rogers group, was preferred infinitely to rhythmic architecture, or beautiful furniture, or exquisite textiles. Even tapestries were patronized as the "poor relations" of painted canvas.

The sense of texture largely disappeared. Relief and color were accepted as all, or almost all, of Art. Pictures and sculpture were worshipped as something divine, bearing the same relation to reality as Plato's ideal forms to real forms.

Art was largely divorced from everyday life. It was held to be something reserved for the comprehension of a chosen few, jealously to be guarded from the multitude and above all from commercialism. In proportion as it was useless was it admitted to be genuine. The slightest practical value damned it forever.

Empire furniture was bad enough. But Empire designers and makers were still within hailing distance of Louis XVI. It remained for post-Empire—what the Germans call Biedermeier; the English

Early Victorian; and we Late or Empire Colonial—to lose even the vestiges of Good Taste to which Empire had clung.

The German term Biedermeier is especially fit. Biedermeier was a character created for the pages of *Die Fliegende Blätter,* the famous Munich comic weekly. During the Napoleonic wars, as during the recent World War, social conditions had been revolutionized. The rich became poor, and the poor became rich. Biedermeier was one of the latter. No furbelows for him. Solid mahogany and plenty of it.

The Nineteenth Century was a *brown* century. Everybody saw brown and everybody wanted to see brown. Ancient paintings and other ancient works of art were admired in proportion as they had browned with age. Critics extolled Rembrandts according to their invisibility, and other paintings for what the artists seemed in their inner souls to have planned, rather than for what they had actually put over. Textiles and wall-papers and painted panels looked as if seen through brown glasses that took all the "pep" out of the reds and blues and golds.

The Nineteenth Century was also a Baroque century. It wanted to have plenty of movement and sculptural relief in its architectural forms. Public buildings still testify loudly to the acquaintance of Nineteenth Century architects with the Invalides and with St. Paul's.

The Nineteenth Century could not even copy intelligently. Its Gothic churches are absurd. Its "Queen Anne" and "Jacobean" reproductions are queer. Its reproductions of Louis XIV, XV, XVI furniture are ludicrous, though often sold for Eighteenth Century in the auction rooms. Its reproductions of Louis XVI have the massiveness of Louis XIV. Its reproductions of Louis XV are always Régence. Its Louis XIV leans towards Louis XIII.

About the middle of the Century, the necessity for improvement became obvious to a few. The Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, in London, was founded and a little later the French Society was established of which the Musée des Arts Decoratifs is a monument. Gradually, people began to realize that painting and sculpture are not all there is of art, and that fine furniture and textiles and pottery are necessary to culture.

The great genius in the revival of English decoration was William Morris. Through his personal efforts, often working with his own hands, he brought about a re-birth of beauty in English tapestries, cretonnes, wall-papers, carpets, and furniture. But even Morris was

unable to rise completely above the baleful ideas of his period, and much of his work is unsatisfactory to the superior taste of today.

To Morris may be largely attributed the increase of interest in the then-called "industrial arts" during the latter part of the Nineteenth Century, not only in England and France, but also in Germany and Austria and Italy and America. Famous English firms that had made good furniture in the Eighteenth Century began again to make good furniture. The exquisite workmanship of French cabinetmakers was no longer wasted entirely on stupidities.

Toward the end of the Century, perhaps inspired by the Japanese, the Art Nouveau movement began. It created some of the worst furniture that the world has ever seen. My late lamented friend, Sir Purdon Clarke, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and later of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, told me an interesting story about Art Nouveau, with permission to publish after his death.

Sir George Donaldson, who was, if I am not mistaken, at that time one of the Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, gave him £5,000 to purchase Art Nouveau furniture at the Paris Exposition of 1900. Sir Purdon expended the money according to his best judgment. When the furniture arrived in London and was put on exhibition, Sir Purdon asked Sir George how he liked the selection.

"Not at all!" responded Sir George. "I am sorry," said Sir Purdon, "I picked out the least extreme examples, and . . . ."

"That is just what is the matter," interrupted Sir George, "I wanted to get the most extreme examples, so that when shown here in London they would kill the style forever!"

I still see evidence of the survival of Art Nouveau in Europe. I note also in Europe, the creation of some freak furniture, suitable only for artistic Bolshevists. But on the whole, the tendency of furniture styles, in England and France as well as elsewhere, is towards sane construction and judicious ornamentation, with reasonable respect for the glorious past.

Nevertheless, none of the furniture made today compares in beauty of design and perfection of workmanship with the best furniture made in France and England in the Eighteenth Century. If a piece is superlatively excellent it is ancient. The difficulty is not to keep from being deceived by the modern, but to get modern reproductions good enough to go in the same room with ancient originals.

However, I want to admit right here, that if we ever do come to

the point where our reproductions are as fine as the originals, I for one would just as lief have them. Age in furniture is no advantage. The infirmities of age are to be avoided rather than sought after. The high regard we have for much ancient furniture is due to its intrinsic excellence; not because of its age but in spite of its age; but we are perhaps influenced by the fact that in furniture the survival of the fittest is the rule. Superior environment and superior care tend to preserve the masterpieces while the refuse disintegrates.

It seems to me quite as dishonest for a dealer to sell a poor piece of ancient furniture for a masterpiece as to deceive about the period of production, and quite as much "faking" to doctor up an inferior ancient piece to look fine as to dope a modern piece to look ancient.

The best furniture made in France and England today is based on Eighteenth Century models. The same is true of Spain and Belgium, but the best Italian reproductions are from the Renaissance.

In furniture of radically modern design the Austrians and Germans excel, largely because they avoid freak construction and seek a simplicity of line hardly the less acceptable because forced. Much of the machine-made Austrian and German furniture is altogether admirable. Especially ingenious was Austrian bentwood.

Yet when we compare complete interiors, the palm for furniture of modern design must unhesitatingly be awarded to the French. From the period of Louis XV they seem to have inherited the ability to indulge in constructional and ornamental frivolities elsewhere ugly, and they handle the architectural background so skilfully that even in the face of violent prejudices, we are obliged to admit that superiority of taste makes it possible for the French to wander after strange gods decoratively without losing their heads.

There is also less tendency everywhere to judge this merit of furniture by the benefit to the artist, and less tendency to regard artists and artisans alike as sacred protegés of the State, to be coddled in proportion as they are inefficient. Art for Art's sake is bad enough, heaven knows, but when it becomes perverted with Art for the Artist's sake the incentive to accomplishment is gone. From the Art point of view the happiest condition is not where State control makes Art a matter of politics, but where high general taste bestows high pecuniary and other rewards upon the artists and artisans whose accomplishments are best, driving out of the field the weaklings.

MODERN FRENCH FURNITURE BY FERNAND NATHAN

Inspiration of the Directoire

Library Set in Mahogany

MODERN FRENCH FURNITURE BY MERCIER FRÉRES

Mahogany drawing room by Gallerey

Dining room in gay colors by Dufrène

Louis XVI commode

Louis XV furniture with painted Chihoiserie walls
by Howard Cushing. Delano and Aldrich, architects

MODERN FRENCH LOUIS XV AND XVI FURNITURE

Dining room furniture from the famous French cabinetmaking school in Paris, L'Ecole Boulle

Trellis tea room in the Colony Club, New York, by Elsie de Wolfe

MODERN ENGLISH FURNITURE, INSPIRATION OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Views of an English Cottage living room. By Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, architects

Living room by Waring and Gillow

Dining room by Waring and Gillow

By Otto Gussman, architect, Dresden

By Franz Messner, architect, Vienna

Design of Julius Mosler, Munich

Design of Richard Riemerschmid, Pasing

Design of Leopold Bauer, Vienna

Design of Paul Ludwig Troost, Munich

MODERN AUSTRIAN FURNITURE BY JOSEPH URBAN

CHAPTER XIV

Furniture and hangings mostly ancient

MODERN AMERICAN INTERIOR IN APARTMENT OF ALBERT HERTER

CHAPTER XIV

MODERN AMERICAN, AND MISSION FURNITURE

Provincialism has its advantages. America still copied Eighteenth Century models in architecture and furniture long after Europe had degenerated into Louis Philippe and Early Victorian. Provincialism also has its disadvantages. The Revival of Taste in America dragged far behind the Revival of Taste in Europe. From the point of view of Good Taste, the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 is as much of a shock as the London International Exhibition of 1853.

We had been too busy with other things. We were building railroads and factories and concentrating our efforts on production in quantity. And the Civil War set us back thirty years. We were out of sympathy with Europe and especially with the best that Europe had to offer. We were determined to go it alone and to avoid entangling alliances with European luxury. The decorative arts seemed to us dangerous and decadent and undemocratic. Fine rugs and tapestries and rich brocades, and elegant lamps and furniture, were beyond our ken. Our architectural standards were disgraceful. Our copies of European Nineteenth Century architecture were much worse than the originals.

Towards the end of the century, however, we began to grope forward. Some of our young architects studied abroad and caught the inspiration for better things. Some of our millionaires began to buy European paintings. European decorators crossed the ocean to furnish the houses of American *nouveaux riches,* and finding the trip paid, settled in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore. Cabinetmakers and upholsterers came with them.

Meanwhile, carpets became fashionable and the weaving of carpets grew to be a mighty industry. Chenille and other heavy draperies followed the carpets and before long machine-woven lace curtains

became common. Occasionally a man would show his independence of American opinion by buying expensive Oriental rugs, especially Ghiordes and Kulahs.

Parallel with the development of decorative textiles came that of decorative furniture. Lumber was so cheap, that with improved machines and quantity production, furniture became cheaper than anywhere else in the world and the use of it more common than anywhere else. Much of this furniture from the design point of view was execrable. Much of it was bad structurally and badly finished. The development of machine carving made possible ornamental horrors more extreme than anything that had gone before.

The improvement that has taken place in American machine-made furniture in the past fifteen years is almost unbelievable. Especially is this noticeable at Grand Rapids, where the furniture industry is the main industry of the town. Extraordinary efforts have been made to chasten forms, strengthen construction and perfect finish. Nowhere in the world are better models used for the creation of good furniture in quantity than at Grand Rapids. The leadership that was won with cheap lumber is now maintained by superior skill and organization.

The United States is the most Classic country in the world. We are more interested in artistic perfection than we are in artistic novelty. We have built a majority of the fine buildings of the Twentieth Century. Not too proud to learn, we are studying with passionate enthusiasm the beautiful monuments of all past Ages. Not afraid to follow, we sit at the feet of Italy, France and England.

Our greatest decorative leader was the late Stanford White, much of whose work is illustrated in this volume. For him Italy was the source and the Italian Renaissance the great inspiration. While he used Ancient Italian furniture wherever possible, he was the great inspirer of Modern American creation, notably in lighting fixtures, and in illuminated leather.

The influence of Stanford White is still splendidly alive. Younger men have followed in his footsteps, inspired by him to appreciation of Classic in concrete form rather than book Classic. Under their direction reproductions are made here in America, not only of the furniture of the Italian Renaissance but also of the furniture of Ancient Rome.

Besides the Italian Renaissance furniture made in America for

the few, there is also much made in shops and factories for more general use. The interest in Italian Renaissance is stimulated throughout the United States in schools of art, where students are taught to know and express the style in decorative designs. Many of the pieces exhibited from time to time at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, inspired by examples in the Museum, have great merit. Most of these pieces are the creation not of individuals but of corporations.

French furniture is no longer generally popular in the United States. The awful examples of Louis XIV and Louis XV, executed here years ago, killed the Louis styles for the middle classes. Only in the finest residences is French furniture now installed, sometimes Modern and sometimes made in America, often Ancient of the highest type.

An inspiration to the study of French furniture, as well as to that of Italian and English furniture, are the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The popular furniture styles in America are English and Colonial. This is true of all grades of society, from the highest to the lowest. In our magnificent country houses, with the architecture English or Italian in style, there is apt to be much more English than Italian furniture. Reproductions of English furniture of all periods are made by the finest cabinetmakers, as well as by the commercial factories. Large quantities of Ancient English furniture and woodwork are constantly crossing the Atlantic to New York, for installation in American homes.

Constantly keener becomes the interest in American Colonial furniture. Organizations like the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities fan this enthusiasm. Museums, like the Jumel Mansion, the Van Cortlandt Mansion, and the Dyckman House, in New York City, assist. For smaller country houses Colonial is the prevailing style.

To be sure, it is not always easy to tell where English leaves off and Colonial begins. Many of our finer Colonial interiors contain much furniture made in England, as did the Colonial interiors of the Eighteenth Century. The finer the interior the more English it is likely to be.

Nevertheless, as our illustrations show, American architects and decorators are creating many interiors with a distinctly Colonial tang, sometimes with ancient American furniture, sometimes with modern.

Some of the Colonial bed rooms furnished with ancient American maple furniture are exquisitely beautiful. Some of the quaint rooms inspired by the humbler examples of Seventeenth or Eighteenth Century Colonial are fascinating, at least to us whose ancestors once lived in them.

There is a tendency in the United States, as soon as a name sells well, or reads well, for merchants and writers to run it into the ground. This tendency is well illustrated by the history of American Mission furniture, whose Spanish-American ancestors are interestingly pictured in this volume in the illustrations contributed by Mr. Harris.

American Mission furniture gets its name from the ancient Spanish Missions of California and New Mexico. The idea of the style was suggested to the late Joseph P. McHugh by a chair sent from California to New York in 1894. This chair had been designed by a California architect for a small Mission church, and had been inspired by the rough and simple furniture of the early Spanish Missions. Its quaint outlines and primitive construction indicated to Mr. McHugh the possibility of a complete scheme of hand-made furniture.

Native ash was chosen as the wood, and seats were made of rushes, haircloth or leather.

This simple furniture became immediately popular, and was ordered from all over the United States. Other makers before long followed Mr. McHugh's example. Craftsman furniture was one of the numerous developments of Mission.

The name Mission became a shibboleth. Heavy and awkward tables and settees and chairs, the cruder the more popular, were produced in quantities by many different makers. Much of this cheap imitation Mission furniture was badly constructed, from wood imperfectly seasoned, and fell apart in use. Robert W. Chambers, in his "Iole," rather appropriately uses the term "slab furniture" for Mission.

The vogue of Mission did a great deal to introduce simple forms of cottage furniture, and by the ridicule which its advocates threw upon over-adorned furniture, helped to banish cheap appliqué machine carvings and other monstrosities. Indeed, Mission furniture played an important part in the upbuilding of American taste, not so much by what it offered as by what it taught to avoid.

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE AS INTERPRETED IN AMERICA

By Charles A. Platt, architect

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE AS INTERPRETED IN AMERICA

Dining room in Mr. White's own residence. Ancient Italian doorway and ceiling, Flemish-Italian Renaissance tapestries, Italian-Empire side table, Italian Renaissance chest and marble fountain, French Renaissance mantel

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE AS INTERPRETED BY THE LATE STANFORD WHITE

Above, music room; below, library; of the Lydig residence, New York. In the music room, note especially the velvet draperies with ancient embroidered armorials, and the velvet walls

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE AS INTERPRETED BY THE LATE STANFORD WHITE

Reception room of the Lydig residence

Library in the Poor residence. Ancient chairs and table

Entrance hall in the Poor residence. Ancient Italian marble table, pedestal, and fountain; French-Flemish Late Gothic mille fleur tapestry with figures

Hall of the Harry Payne Whitney residence. Most of the furniture, ancient

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE AS INTERPRETED BY THE LATE STANFORD WHITE

In their New York apartment, with background of ancient objects. By Bolton and Francis Jones

MODERN AMERICAN CHEST OF ITALIAN INSPIRATION

Cabinet with sgraffito ornament and painted panels by Warren Dahler

Wall table above, and sideboard below, with sgraffito ornament and painted panels by Warren Dahler

Manufacturers' Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

MODERN AMERICAN FURNITURE OF RENAISSANCE INSPIRATION

Ancient carved and gilded woodwork skilfully employed

MODERN AMERICAN INTERIOR BY ALBERT HERTER

Louis XV and Louis XVI styles in harmonious assemblage

MODERN AMERICAN LOUIS XV INTERIOR

In the East Room at the White House, Washington. McKim, Mead and White, architects

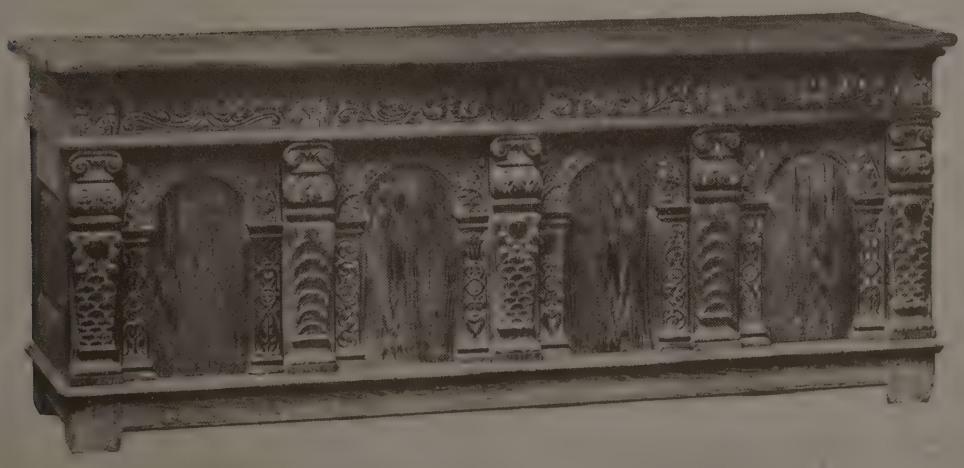
MODERN AMERICAN LOUIS XVI INTERIOR

In a New York apartment building. McKim, Mead and White, architects

MODERN AMERICAN LQUIS XVI DRAWING ROOM

From the Manufacturers' Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

MODERN AMERICAN FURNITURE INSPIRED BY THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE



Copy of the famous Raleigh chest illustrated by MacQuoid

MODERN AMERICAN FURNITURE OF ENGLISH JACOBEAN INSPIRATION

MODERN AMERICAN JACOBEAN REPRODUCTIONS

English Jacobean Inspiration

MODERN AMERICAN FURNITURE BY WALTER MELLOR

Charles II

Chippendale

Charles II

Queen Anne

Charles II

MODERN AMERICAN REPRODUCTIONS OF ANCIENT ENGLISH FURNITURE

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

Nos. 1, 3, 4, William and Mary. No. 2, Queen Anne

MODERN AMERICAN REPRODUCTIONS OF ENGLISH WILLIAM AND MARY AND QUEEN ANNE

In the Henry P. Davison residence, New York

MODERN AMERICAN INTERPRETATION OF ENGLISH GEORGIAN

In the residence of Mrs. J. S. Rogers, New York

MODERN AMERICAN INTERPRETATION OF ENGLISH GEORGIAN

Louis XV, upholstered in crewel needlework

Copies of two ancient Chippendale chairs in Canada.
From 1915 exhibition of the Handicraft Club, Baltimore

Adapted from Historic Models

MODERN AMERICAN MACHINE-MADE CHAIRS AND TABLES

MODERN AMERICAN FURNITURE INSPIRED BY CHINESE CHIPPENDALE

MODERN AMERICAN LACQUERED FURNITURE OF ENGLISH INSPIRATION

Straight-line furniture

Colonial inspiration

SIMPLE MODERN AMERICAN INTERIORS

Reception room in Pepper residence, Jenkintown, Pa.
By Wilson Eyre, architect

MODERN AMERICAN VERSION OF ADAM

In the A. L. Kramer residence, Westbury, Long Island

In the G. Stewart residence, Locust Valley, Long Island

MODERN AMERICAN INTERPRETATIONS OF COLONIAL BED ROOMS

Modern version of American Colonial. William Emerson, architect

A perfect creation in the style our ancestors loved. Peabody, Wilson and Brown, architects

Made by Wm. Laurel Harris, mural painter, for his Lake George studio, from saplings cut by himself in the locality

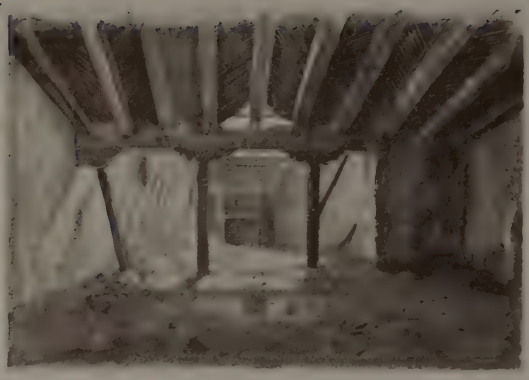
MODERN AMERICAN RUSTIC FURNITURE

Breakfast room by Arthur Covey

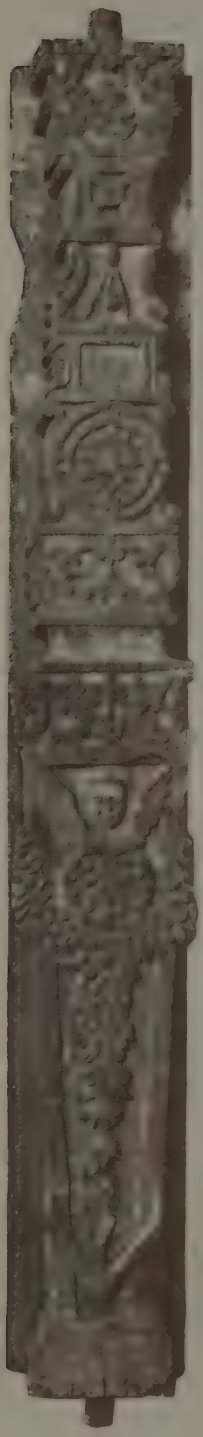
Two groupings from Wm. Laurel Harris' Mayflower room

Davanzati living room by J. Mortimer Lichtenauer. Models of rooms by members of the National Society of Mural Painters made for the annual exhibition of the Architectural League of New York

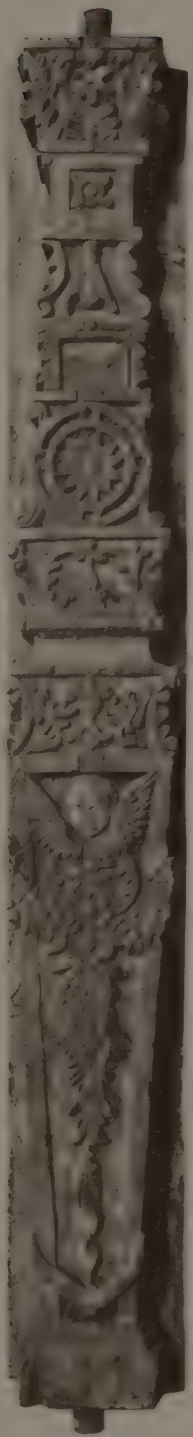
MODERN AMERICAN MINIATURE MODEL ROOMS



(1) View in the ruins of the oldest church in the United States. Our Lady of Guadaloupe at Zuni, New Mexico. From this mission church the carved wood pilasters, shown in (2) and (3) were recovered. These pilasters were probably designed by Franciscan missionaries and executed by Zuni craftsmen



(2)



(3)

(4) Ancient kneeling chair from a mission at Zuni, New Mexico

(5) Ancient leather trunk and trunk rack from a mission at Zuni, New Mexico

ANCIENT AMERICAN MISSION FURNITURE

Three early Spanish-American chairs, the middle one from Santa Fé, New Mexico, with rawhide seat, and joints bound with thongs of rawhide, as the illustration shows

Decorated with Indian gouge work

Writing desk, New Mexico, Seventeenth Century

Rawhide leather chest of the Seventeenth Century

By George W. Maher, architect

MODERN AMERICAN MISSION FURNITURE